

,Great OCHNTVDIIA: non-existent warrior,

Front-line soldier against the Stalinists

Gorbachevsky's victory in
spite of Stalin

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"the military genius of the Leader>

Great Patriotic War: Unknown War

Borne Gorbachevskiy

Refutation of the myth 0

"the military genius of the Leader>>

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A new book from the author of the bestseller "Rzhev meat grinder". The bitter truth about the Great Patriotic War, which will infuriate all Stalinists. A front-line veteran who survived the bloodiest and longest battle of the Second World War, refutes one of the main Soviet myths - about the "great strategist Stalin" and his "invaluable contribution to the Victory." Having fought from Rzhev to Koenigsberg, based on his own front-line experience, the author proves that the Red Army won not thanks to

rya, but contrary to the Kremlin tyrant, who never spared the lives of soldiers and recognized only one strategic method: to fill the enemy with corpses; that the people won the war, and Stalin stole and appropriated the Great Victory.

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A FEW PRELIMINARY WORDS

The theme "Stalin and the War" in modern Russia and in the West has long become a kind of classic. Much has been said, even more lies and apologetics have been written, and very little truth.

In the ongoing discussion, an important aspect is the discussion of the military activities of I.V. Stalin. Obviously, this is due to the fact that Stalin in the Second World War was an ally of Roosevelt and Churchill, the Supreme Commander of the Red Army and, accordingly, led the Stavka. The guns had not yet fallen silent, when Stalin deftly climbed onto the pedestal of the "great strategist and commander." Note that already on June 24, 1945, in a ceremonial speech on the occasion of the Victory, Zhukov called Stalin the great commander, under whose leadership the Red Army defeated Nazi Germany. After 30 years, the marshal called his Supreme shtafirka. Why should we believe? Khrushchev, with a terrible noise, threw Gene ralissimus from a high pedestal. Brezhnev tried to revive the cult of the "great commander" but failed... More than 65 years have passed since the Patriotic War. It would be time to finally figure out who is who, but until DIT comes out ...

In his book, the author expresses his position on this subject as a front-line soldier, a former captain of the Red Army, a witness and an active participant in the major combat events of the Great Patriotic War. Of course, I do not claim to be the ultimate truth.

'Shtafirka' was the name used in the Russian army for a person who was far from military affairs.

In the previous book "Rzhev meat grinder"! I have partly told about what Stalin's strategy is, which turned, for example, the three main battles near Rzhev into a bloody massacre. In this book, I continue the topic I touched on earlier.

In response to the nightingale trills of court historians about the "great commander", I will name three of his most important strategic miscalculations.

On the first day of the war, mediocre directives to the front districts, in 1941-1942, an erroneous prediction of the directions of the enemy's main attack. No one dared to refute the mistakes of the strategist's dictatorial thinking. How many human lives it cost - only God knows, but is silent.

In fact, Stalin did not have any principled strategy. His strategy consisted in one most cruel demand: "Fight at any cost!" This meant fighting without regard for human lives and the loss of military equipment. This is how the Red Army fought near Moscow, near Rzhev, on the Dnieper, near Koenigsberg, this is how they took Berlin. This was the vein of Stalin's military leadership. It did not go beyond the walls of the Kremlin and Headquarters. The Supreme Commander NEVER went to the front - "an armchair commander." Unfortunately, the still classified documents of the Headquarters do not allow to fully reveal the actions of the Supreme Commander, including the Stalingrad operation.

If a front-line operation (there were more than 300 of them) ended in success, Stalin wrote it down on his own account; if there were failures, massacre after massacre immediately followed and a scapegoat was found. Just think, more than 100 generals were shot, taking the rap for Stalin's blunders. Surprisingly, failures in the battles near Rzhev became an exception to the rules of the Supreme. However, this did not prevent him from receiving the rank of marshal.

| Orbachvsky B. - Rzhev meat grinder. Publishing house "Ruda" - EKSMO, 2007

A small fraction of the deeds of the "great strategist" history still captured. REMEMBER!

Seven million dead soldiers and officers of the Red Army, of which five million were buried in mass graves unknown; about five million prisoners of war, of whom over two million were killed in German camps and almost the same number in Soviet ones; two and a half million crippled to the end of their lives disabled people with a sad fate in the conditions of life under the Soviet regime (in one of the appendices this is described in more detail); half a million deserters. Desertion in the Red Army continued even in the 1945 victorious year, about one million of "their own" soldiers and officers were shot by "their own", often without trial or investigation, special officers and Smershevites.

Finally, let's talk about the unprecedented in history so-called "filtering" (testing for loyalty), started by Stalin back in 1941. During the war and after it

More than 10 million men and women were "checked" in special camps of the Gulag type. Former Soviet prisoners of war, encircled, the most diverse people who lived in the occupied territory, "breathed the spirit of the enemy".

Many who did not pass the "test", beaten and beaten, who were forced to repent and sign fake testimonies, went stage by stage to the Gulag camps or to be shot. There is a lot of evidence for this, which I talk about in my book. The final figure of all who died in the Second World War is 27-30 million people.

Here it is, a far from complete list of the cost of the Victory of the "great strategist and commander."

Today, the knights in Rus' are making noise with might and main, remembering "the battles where they fought together" not without a cup, they call the tall leader, they call him the creator of Victory, the symbol of the Fatherland! It makes me want to say: "Come to your senses from forgetfulness, gentlemen! Was it really so?

Noah is sure there will be readers who will ask (with iro

AND

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with or without) a fair question about the true creator of the Victory, which will remind you of "Stalin's ten blows."

The Belarusian historian Vladimir Beshanov wrote an honest book in which he spoke in detail about the battles of the Red Army with the enemy, which Soviet propagandists dubbed "ten Stalinist blows." Those were really the best blows against the enemy (1944-1945). However, when you read the figures of the losses of the Red Army in these strikes, given by the author, your hair stands on end. Again, they fought at any cost, not by skill, but by quantity.

pom.

Now it's time to name the true creators of Pobeda.

Near Rzhev in the summer of 1942, Andrey Filimonovich Kupriyanov, our first divisional commander, told us, his first soldiers, the following. All of them perished in the fields near Moscow. In total, thousands of cadets from 70 military schools of the country defended Moscow then. At the cost of their lives, they saved the capital. Their feat is still waiting for its chronicler.

HERE THEY ARE THE CREATORS OF VICTORY!

What is known to the modern generation about 400 soldiers who repeated the feat of Alexander Matrosov? Among them was Sergeant Ivan Alekseev from the 220th Rifle Division. I knew this guy.

HERE THEY ARE THE CREATORS OF WHITE!

How little we know about those heroes, soldiers and officers who stopped the German advance on Moscow for two months near Smolensk. How many of them laid their heads there?

HERE THEY ARE THE CREATORS OF WHITE!

The high honor of the creator of the Victory deserves a simple woman - a Belarusian partisan who killed Kube, the Nazi Gauleiter of occupied Belarus.

The list of true creators of the Victory at the front and in the rear during the Patriotic War is endless.

I can not ignore the simplified view of modern

generation of Russians for the role of allies in the joint struggle against Nazi Germany.

"We would have won without them!" No! German historians believe that they lost the war for three reasons. These are strategic allied aviation, lend-lease and the unexpected stubborn resistance of the Russians. This is not far from the TRUTH.

A few words about the "unexpected resistance of the Red Army", which, according to some historians, supposedly did not take place in 1941]. The Germans suffered the heaviest losses during the war with the Red Army. In the summer of 1941, the Wehrmacht lost 742 thousand soldiers. Whereas in the war against Poland, France, England, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and the Balkan countries, Germany lost 418,805 of its soldiers. To finish talking about our allies, I will give one little-known example. More than 6,000 American and British sailors perished at sea during the Lend-Lease delivery on ships to the Soviet Union of military equipment.

HERE THEY ARE THE CREATORS OF VICTORY!

After the end of the war, Stalin deceived the whole world, his own people, and us front-line soldiers. He gave deliberately low numbers of the dead. This is what the "leader of the peoples" did for the sake of the inflated glory of the "commander". Party officials promised that the state would take care of the dead, but even that became a lie. After 20-30 years, convinced of the deception, veterans and youth, children and grandchildren of the dead took up shovels. Over the past time, "search engines" (high school students, young workers, students) have dug up tens of thousands of Soviet remains on the fields of former battles.

warriors and buried them with dignity.

And the last thing that can not be said. An unprecedented event took place in Russia. Two Moscow publishing houses - Ast-Astrel and Yauza EKSMO - literally published more than 10 books by two authors - aviation engineer

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ra from Samara Mark Solonin and the greatest American military historian David M. Glantz. As an example, I will name a few of their books.

The appearance in print of the works of Mark Solonin and David M. Glantz opens a new page in Russian military-political literature. This is a serious reading, it captures the spirit, calls for deep reflection, rethinking of many previously "indisputable" truths. Similar books Russian military historiography

dont know.

A young friend, "a young, unfamiliar tribe," if you want to know how it really was during the Great Patriotic War, how the Red Army won, about the authors I named. Their books, I have no doubt, will bring Russians closer to a better understanding of the topic "Stalin and the war."

Boris Gorbachevsky

© Mark Solonin. "June 22, or When the Great Patriotic War began." M. EKSMO-Yauchza, 2007.

© David M. Glani. The biggest defeat of Zhukov. The catastrophe of the Red Army in the operation "Mars" in 1942. M.: Ast-Astrel, 2008.

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"There is nothing higher than the truth." F. M. Dostoevsky

Chapter first

DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC
WAR. PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS.
THREE STORIES THAT HAPPENED
A WEEK BEFORE THE WAR AND MORE
SOMETHING ABOUT...

In the early days of the war

A few days before June 22, I passed my last school exam. We lived then in the suburbs, in a marvelous historical place - Kuskovo. Close to the capital. There was a forest not far from our two-story wooden house. A little further - a magnificent park ensemble, which was the estate of the famous nobleman of Catherine's times - Count P. Sheremetev, where the palace was perfectly preserved with magnificent decoration, a rich collection of paintings by Russian and Western masters, with a unique collection of Russian porcelain of the 18th century. Near the park there is a lake with tiny green islands, a haven for swans. Meeting them was always a pleasure.

June 22, in the morning, I was still swimming in the lake, enjoying the sunny, quiet Sunday afternoon, warm water.

About a week before the start of the war, when I returned home from Moscow and showed my matriculation certificate to my mother, she, congratulating me on graduating from high school, handed me a summons from the military registration and enlistment office. A day later, I passed the medical commission and found out that I was assigned to the sea.

eleven

infantry. At that time, the Red Army was just creating the first units of marines. To my question to the military commissar: "What should I do, I don't know how to swim?" - he laughed and replied: "They will teach!" After that, probably not for the first time, he told an old story about a man who did not want to go into the water until he learned to swim. He ordered to cut his hair and on Monday, the 23rd, to come with things.

I arrived on the appointed day. The military commissariat - do not know. Noise, calls, running around, shouting, arguing. All corridors and stairs are filled with young people. These are volunteers: they are rushing to the front. He went out as a military commissar and in a loud voice told everyone: "You guys will still have a turn. The war only started yesterday." It became known that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR announced the mobilization of thirteen ages in fourteen military districts of the country. As we understood, people who had previously served in the Red Army were called up. All the volunteers, and me along with them, were sent home until further notice.

It's hard to forget "that longest day" and the shortest night of the year. Especially noon...

At noon, dad, mom and I were waiting for the announced speech by V. M. Molotov. We all sat around a table with a radio receiver - a rarity in the Soviet family at that time - and silently waited for the hands of the clock to reach twelve ... Every word of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs tore the soul, reached the heart, and it beat faster. True, at that time I was still not very aware of the terrible misfortune that had fallen literally in an instant on the country. From what

didn't that misfortune immediately pierce my soul? Is it due to youth, or from blind faith in the Soviet press? I could not imagine how it could be so: yesterday's friends suddenly became sworn enemies.

I was born in a calm peaceful time. My generation knew about the war only from books and films. Most of the books and films glorified the Red Army, and the songs that we sang around the fires in the pioneer detachments represented in our imagination victorious deeds in battles with the enemy. I, like many of my peers, could not immediately

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to fully comprehend what happened, especially since for almost two years the authorities and the press have been convincing the people that Germany is our best friend, but "American plutocrats and English treacherous ones" are our worst enemies. What happened? Just a week ago, TASS refuted supposedly false rumors that Germany was going to attack us ... And suddenly? ..

Everyone lost their heads: mom and dad seemed to be numb. Dad smoked all the time. Mom hugged me and cried. Why? Although about seventy years have passed since that day, those first harsh words stuck in my memory: "Today at four o'clock in the morning, without presenting any claims against the Soviet Union, without declaring war, German troops attacked our country ... The speech ended like this: "Our cause is just. The enemy will be defeated. Victory will be ours". And that's all ... How to understand the high words spoken?

Why did yesterday's friend, addressed to whom so many warm and cordial words were spoken, suddenly attack the country? Were there any complaints or not? Did Germany attack us without declaring war? When will trouble come? Why is our cause right? Questions, questions and all without answers.

German claims - what is known about them? For the first time "Hitler's Declaration", although in an abbreviated form, appeared in the West in the New York Times on June 22, 1941.

of the year.

For the first time, the truth about the concentration of Soviet troops on the border appeared in the press in 1986, that is, 45 years after the 41st. Only then did we learn that not long before the German attack on the USSR, more than 800 thousand people were secretly drafted into the Red Army. This is official data. And here is my personal testimony. In 1941, every day, while waiting at the station for an electric train to Moscow, I saw how the tracks were clogged with military trains. In May and in the first half of June there were more and more of them every day. Soldiers exchanged jokes through the open doors of the carriages. When one of the trains moved

first, the soldiers usually said goodbye like this: "See you in Berlin!"

Millions of people "from Moscow to the very outskirts", listening to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, could not help but think about the fate of their fathers, husbands and sons, with whom, as everyone understood, they would part very soon, and perhaps forever. I recalled the two phrases I heard on the street that day: "There will be a lot of blood ..." and "I believe in Comrade Stalin." And one more thing: in those first days of the war, the Soviet people, not in jest, but in earnest, asked each other (dad told me about this): "Why don't the German soldiers surrender to the Red Army?", Or: "Why didn't the German working class rise up against Hitler?" or "How should we treat the Germans when the Red Army enters German territory?" Today it sounds ridiculous... Yes, and then the Soviet people were brainwashed for so long about class solidarity, about a war with little bloodshed on foreign territory. Let us be indulgent to those who asked then, in 1941, naive questions.

What happened at the border in those days? Here is an excerpt from a letter from former front-line soldier Modest Markovich Markov to the Izvestia newspaper: "Two weeks before the war, we were gathered in the house of command staff and read a lecture: "Germany is a true friend of the Soviet Union." Put the tanks into conservation, hand over the ammunition to the art warehouse. I ran to the park at 00:30. Planes are flying in the sky. Everyone is in a cheerful mood: the maneuvers have begun. The first bombing strike is on the warehouse. Shouts: "These are practice cement bombs!" The second approach - and a blow to the neighboring battalion. Cries: someone was killed, someone's legs were torn off ... Only then did we understand that this was a war.

Two more short letters.

P. Chernyaev: "I was on duty at the unit when it started. The sky is clear, without clouds, but there was thunder. Their artillery hit Grodno through us. We were without weapons, and the pilots

! Collection of soldier's memoirs "I saw it". Moscow: Time, 1965.

Delhi. They cut us right with their wings. Armored tanks, almost without firing, crushed the soldiers. And we have nothing to shoot at a sparrow with. Regiment commander Chumakov's legs were torn off, but he managed to command: "Save yourself, as best you can!" Only a few were already alive.

S. Zubenko: "Sergeant Volodya Kapustin died on the first day near Graevo. Choking on blood, tried to recover

to give in that I could not do more than what I did. His last words: "We didn't lose, not the rank and file."

From the ether came hoarse voices, often resembling military commands, the roll of drums, victorious fanlights thundered. In all this radio noise, mostly non-German speech was heard. There was something about her that she could pick up and understand. I studied German at school. German troops reached Minsk, broke into the Baltic states, marched on Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv.

When I told my dad about what I heard, he didn't believe me and asked again: "Maybe you didn't understand something, did you make a mistake?" I repeated what I said. He was terribly upset and kept saying: "How could this happen? Where is the Red Army? How did Stalin allow this? He immediately asked me not to share the bad news with anyone until official reports appeared. Soon the authorities ordered all citizens to turn in their radios.

We did not turn off the black radio dish attached to the wall around the clock: what if something important was reported, "At the last hour." I am anxiously listening to the reports of the Soviet Information Bureau, which was created on the second day after the start of the war. They were transmitted twice a day - in the morning and in the evening, and then repeated many times.

Only a few days of hostilities had passed, and the tone of front-line reports, no matter how hard they tried to varnish them, did not reassure. Firstly, they fought on our own, and not on foreign territory, as Comrade Stalin assured us about this more than once; secondly, like film frames, different directions of battles appeared and disappeared, followed by millions of people.

Here is the first summary of the Soviet General Staff, it seems to be happy

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true, as we now know, is not true: "On June 22, 1941, regular troops of the German army attacked our border outposts on the front from the Baltic to the Black Sea and were held back by them during the first half of the day. In the afternoon, the German troops met with the advanced units of the field troops of the Red Army. After fierce fighting, the enemy was repulsed with heavy losses. Only in the Grodno and rat-Polish directions did the enemy manage to achieve insignificant tactical successes and occupy the towns of Kalwaria, Stojanow and Tsekhanovets. (the first two are 15 km away and the last one is 10 km from the border).

Enemy aviation attacked a number of our airfields and settlements, but everywhere they met with a decisive rebuff from our fighters and anti-aircraft artillery, which inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. We shot down 65 self

years".

On the fourth day of the war, June 26, Ilya Ehrenburg's first article "The Hitler Horde" was published in the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper. This is how the best publicist during the war years, a favorite of front-line soldiers, began his career. On July 24, the first poem by Konstantin Simonov, "Contempt for Death," appeared on the pages of Krasnaya Zvezda. On August 6, the same newspaper published his second poem, "The Secret of Victory." This is how one of the best front-line poets began his career. The lines of the poet were remembered for a lifetime: "The brave have only immortality, the brave have no death!"

On the ninth day of the war, information was announced about four main directions: Minsk, Lutsk, Novy Rod-Volyn, Baranovichi ... On the twentieth day, new directions were announced: Polotsk, Bobruisk, Mogilev-Podolsk. More and more new directions ... This is disturbing, people's faces are more often gloomy. It's getting harder and harder to grasp the bitter reality. The enemy is rushing and rushing. Closer to Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv. Where did the planes go, about which poets wrote so colorfully and songs sounded - about the heroic "red falcons"?

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Quite recently, in many Palaces of Culture, in factory clubs, people carefully looked at the colorful posters of GLAVPUR, and their hearts were filled with pride. Still ... One artillery salvo of the Soviet division, as stated in those posters, is twice as powerful as the salvo of the enemy division. And what - guess? There was a war. The gunners rolled out the cannons - trouble, the shells seemed to fly into the sky.

On June 27, on the fifth day of the war, an announcement appeared about the creation of the State Defense Committee. From now on, all power in the country was concentrated in his hands. I.V. Stalin.

With every day of the war, people are beginning to understand more and more what the disappearance of some and the emergence of new directions actually mean ... The reports are so short, illogical, unclear, and the newspapers mainly trumpet about the first heroes-pilots, about the exploits of tankers, who gave worthy from the time to the aggressor. And the aggressor has already occupied Belarus, the Baltic states, part of Ukraine, and Moldova. How is it possible to comprehend such a thing?

They hide from the people the encirclement of entire armies, corps, divisions, the capture of thousands and thousands of commanders and fighters. Rumors about the tragedy of the situation on the fronts were exactly circling in the air, and people intercepted them, asking each other the same question: "When will the turning point come?" Grains of the cruel truth about the ongoing catastrophe of the Red Army still seeped into society, and they chilled the souls.

More flexible terminology appeared in the press: "movement", "wedged in", "fought to the end", "withdrew to a new defensive line", "successfully repulsed enemy attacks", "change of positions", etc. In the Russian historiography of the Great Patriotic War, there has long been a new linguistic generalization that allegedly explains the first terrible period of the war, "strategic defense". Do modern Russian historians really assume that their lie, like any lie, having long legs, will be able to overtake the truth?

On July 21, bombs hit Moscow for the first time. Through

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For a week, the old directions disappeared from the Sovinformburo reports: Polotsk, Pskov, Novgorod-Volynsk, Bobruisk, but Smolensk remained ... Again, unthinkable embarrassment, severe pain in the heart. Zhytomyr, Korosten, Bila Tserkva directions disappeared. It became clear: Zhytomyr, Korosten, Belaya Tserkov were in the hands of the Germans...

How did the Germans themselves assess the beginning of the war? Now it has become known. Her first days were easy for them. This is evidenced by the chief of the General Staff of the Wehrmacht - Franz Halder. Here is what he wrote in his diary: "The offensive of our troops, apparently, was a complete tactical surprise on the entire front. The border bridges across the Bug and other rivers have been everywhere captured by our troops without a fight and in complete safety. The complete surprise of our offensive for the enemy is evidenced by the fact that the units were taken by surprise and in the barracks position, the planes stood at the airfields, covered with tarpaulin, and the advanced units, suddenly attacked by our troops, asked the command about what to do. An even greater influence of the element of surprise on the further course of events can be expected as a result of the rapid advance of units, for which at present there is every possibility. The naval command also reports that the enemy has apparently been taken by surprise. In recent days, he has been quite passively watching all our activities and is now concentrating his naval forces in ports, obviously fearing mines.

The Air Force command reported that our air force had destroyed 800 enemy aircraft. Our aviation managed to mine the approaches to Leningrad from the sea without loss. German losses still amount to 10 aircraft. The command of the Army Group "South" reported that our patrols, without encountering resistance, crossed the Prut ... The bridges are in our hands ... The protection of the border itself was, in general, weak ... After the initial "tetanus" caused by surprise attacks, pro-

The enemy turned to active operations... In a number of sectors of the front, there was almost no leadership of the actions of the troops from the side of the highest headquarters... It seems that the Russian command, due to its slowness, will not be able to organize operational opposition to our offensive in the near future at all.. There is no organized resistance."

On the very first day of the war, I went to the city to visit my friend Mark Podobedov. Their family, like mine, moved from Kharkov to Moscow shortly before the war. Mark and I went to the same school and in the same class. On the way, I went to the only newspaper window in Kuskovo and looked through Pravda. I could not believe my eyes, I looked through all four pages again. How ridiculous the main party newspaper of the country looks. The war began, and there was not a word about it in the newspaper of June 22.

The Podobedovs greeted me warmly. Everyone was talking about the beginning of the war. Nobody understands why Hitler attacked Russia? This is German suicide! Mark's stepfather, no longer a young, religious man who fought back in World War I, angrily and openly declared: "Our Germans are God's punishment to a great sinner for his atrocities. It will cost us dearly." Everyone understood who he meant when he spoke of the "great sinner." I did not object, although I did not really understand what ordinary people were sinful about? The eldest son Zhenya, an engineer at an aircraft factory, said that in the coming days they would begin to relocate to the east. The youngest son Mark is a chronic asthmatic and is unsuitable for the army. But he is acutely worried about the misfortune and is going to go to dig anti-tank ditches.

Two days later I again went to Moscow. I visited the city committee of the Komsomol on Arkhipov Street. I was included in the list of Komsomol members - to participate in the construction of defense lines around Moscow. Then I headed to the city center.

I walk along the main street named after Maxim Gorky: from the center to the Belorussky railway station. The entrance to Red Square is heavily guarded. Soldiers appeared on the streets

patrols, the German red flag with a swastika on the building of the German embassy is no longer visible, and it itself is closed. Some people are unloading heavy sandbags and blocking the wide shop windows with them. Everywhere you look, the windows in the apartments are pasted over with paper strips crosswise in case of bombing. The first signs showing the paths to the bomb shelters appeared. How strange: only the third day of the war, and the city quickly adapts to the new conditions of life. How is it up there, is it the same?

Children play war on Pushkin Square. I stopped and listened to their conversation. The same as always before the WAR: "BLUE" AND "RED". Boys are scouts, and girls are nurses. Agreement: "Chur, do not kill nurses." Will the Germans do this?

I go to the bookstore. The poster with the words "Let the Soviet-German friendship grow stronger" has disappeared, and the others are not yet visible. Looks like they're waiting for instructions. On the other hand, books about Russian generals, about Russian prowess in the past, appeared on bookcases. Basically, as I noticed, these books are sold out. You can see the first stands with caricatures and caricatures - the works of talented artists Boris Efimov and Kukryniksy. It is now known that Goebbels included them, together with Ehrenburg, in the list of persons to be hanged, of course, after the victory of the German army.

Many military men, as a rule, are in brand new uniforms. I'm still poorly versed in military differences. Marching companies pass, they go mainly to the Belorussky railway station.

On Saturday evening, an old friend of the Pope, Canaan Zatuchny, a journalist, came to visit us in Kuskovo. In the past, they worked together, and dad was worried about his broken career and fate. It is worth talking about it briefly. In 1937, Zatuchny became the editor-in-chief of Donetskskaya Pravda. One summer evening, a friend, an employee of the local NKVD department, called him at the editorial office and asked him to come out for a couple of minutes. Risking his own life, he informed Zatuchny that at night they would "come" for HIM. The editor-in-chief did not return to the editorial office. He secretly lived more

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'three years in Moscow on Pokrovsky Street with his own sister. And those who "came for him" left with nothing, and the person was "lost"...

That evening Zatuchny told us so much. He was better informed about the situation at the front than we were. Named the reasons for the first defeats of the Red Army. He also spoke about the destruction by the Germans in the captured cities of the Jewish population, about which - from the first to the last days of the war -

the press was silent.

By the way, we did not know "who is who": for example, who is the first commissar of the army, who is in charge of the information and press organs? Lev Zakharovich Mekhlis - head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, chief editors of newspapers: Izvestia - Lev Rovinsky, Krasnaya Zvezda - David Ortenberg, TASS director - Yakov Khavinson, deputy. director of the Sovinformburo - Solomon Lozovsky - "Jewish bouquet", Canaan joked. Here is food for Goebbels ...

Before leaving, Canaan told that he was leaving for Al-

ma-Atu. He hooked up with a woman who was an assistant city attorney. She promised him to change her passport, and he swore to live with her until the end of the war.

The Pope asked Canaan:

"Are you not afraid of being her hostage if your life doesn't work out?"

"I have no other choice," Zatuchny answered. - In Moscow, with my sister or with my friends in the Moscow region, I can no longer stay. Risky. The harsh war time begins.

When we parted, Canaan expressed an optimistic view of the course of the war: "Hitler does not know Stalin well. This Asiatic will put millions of peasants in soldier's overcoats. This is not the first time for him, but he will drive the Fuhrer into a coffin ... "

In the first days of the war, poems by Lebed va-Kumach appeared in print:

Get up, huge country, get up for
mortal combat,

With dark fascist power, With the
damned horde!

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These poems, published under the title "Holy War", soon became the main song of the war. It was usually sung standing up like a hymn. So they called the war for a long time - "Holy Noah", "People's", "Great", "Patriotic". The name "Great Patriotic War" appeared much later. For the first time, the war against the fascists was called so in the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief | November 1944'.

TWO FEATS

In early July, my father was appointed head of a large construction site in the Urals, in the city of Kyshtym. It took seven months to build a graphite plant. At that time, graphite was used mainly for the manufacture of artillery shells and the production of pencils. Not much time will pass - even an atomic reactor cannot do without graphite. In that first wartime, some areas where graphite was mined had already been occupied by the Germans, while others were under the threat of rapid occupation.

With a certificate signed by the people's commissar, by order of the State Defense Committee, dad and his assistants left for the Urals. At the end of July, and my mother and I

together with employees of the People's Commissariat for the Building Materials Industry (where dad led the mining of non-metallic minerals) and their families, they dragged themselves in freight cars to Kyshtym. They traveled at a "low speed" and arrived there in mid-August.

What impressed me the most along the way? We were often overtaken by long trains with barred windows in the carriages. They moved with greater speed than us, not to the west, but all to the east. Loud cries came from the windows. "We are being taken to the camps! We are being taken to the camps! people shouted. We want to go to the front: to defend the Motherland! Pass it on

| Orenburg. June - December forty-first. Chronicle story. M.: Soviet writer, 1984. S. 10-11.

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explain to Stalin. He does not know". And again: "We know we are being taken to camps, not to the front!"

We were often overtaken by ambulance trains. At the stops where we were close, I tried to talk to the sisters, orderlies. I tried to find out at least a drop of the truth about the events at the front. However, everyone I contacted went unanswered. Apparently, they were forbidden to enter into any conversations on these topics with strangers. From the very first meeting, I liked the city where we arrived. All green, clean, with a large forest around, with a river, with good-natured and hard-working residents. Many of them were avid hunters, fishermen and mushroom pickers. Dad prepared for us a spacious peasant five-walled hut. I lived in it until December 1941, until I went to ar

MIA.

Arriving in Kyshtym, the next day I went to the enlistment office. The military commissar took note of me and, given my secondary education, promised to send me to a military school as soon as he got a place. Soon such a moment came, and I went to enter the Chelyabinsk tank school. The medical commission did not allow me to become a tanker. It turned out that I was color-blind (which I did not know about myself until then), that I had the strongest flat feet and a weak heart. How much I asked: "Understand the meaning of color blindness! There are no traffic lights at the front!" The doctors did not want to hear anything and put me out into the corridor. I liked teaching. No drill. Cadets were taught to drive tanks, fight enemy tanks, overcome water obstacles on them, save cars and themselves if necessary ... Cadets were sent straight from the factory on brand new tanks to the front.

Returning to Kyshtym, I told the military commissar about my failure. He reassured me: "If you didn't fit into the tankers, you will become an artilleryman;

Ordered to wait.

In September I went to work as an apprentice turner at a defense plant.
How it arose in Kyshtym is a case

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special and at the same time typical of that heroic time when people at the front and in the rear tried to save the Fatherland. Here's how it happened. About a month and a half after the start of the war, 28 Jews arrived in Kyshtym. Simple, humble people. Some of them are religious. They left their native Kyiv when the Germans were approaching the city.

In Kyiv, they all worked at the bed factory. Among them were turners, locksmiths, toolmakers, electroplaters. The factory produced pre-war metal beds with nickel-plated backs, covered with iron mesh. Its director was a thirty-two-year-old engineer Lenya Umansky. He graduated from the Kiev Polytechnic Institute, where he studied with my cousin. Few Ukrainians went with them. For what? They reasoned like this: "We are not Jews. Why do we need to be dumb?"

Energetic Lenya took out open platforms, loaded machine tools, tools, wires, even lubricants on them. There were almost no empty seats. Still, the workers and their families somehow settled down. Lenya forbade taking junk with him. Allowed me to take food. On the ninth day, the people of Kiev arrived in Chelyabinsk. They were sent to Kyshtym. On the very first day, while the workers, their wives and children were unloading the platforms, Lenya went to the secretary of the city party committee. He introduced him to the idea that was born on the way - to create a plant for the manufacture of shells for tanks. He put a folder with calculations on the secretary's desk. "We are asking the city," said Lenya, "small: a platform, and even better, some old, but ready-made premises, seventy work cards and armor for everyone who works at the plant."

There was a war going on, and anyone on whom anything, even the smallest, depended, had to make decisions in a matter of days, or rather, in a matter of hours, to find a way out in the most difficult situation. The next day, the secretary of the search for Lenya announced to him: "We have found a room - the old stables of the former stud farm. Nothing else

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No. Get them in order. I hope you manage. Whatever you ask, you will receive. Good luck to you. Everyone is not only a day, but an hour of the road. The Fatherland is in danger!"

"The Fatherland is in danger!" - this phrase, in those days for the first time publicly uttered by Stalin, became a kind of magic spell, a password, an expression of faith in victory not only at the front, but also in the rear. They woke up with her and went to bed, they accompanied their husbands and sons to the front with her, they made their way behind enemy lines on partisan paths with her, they went into battle with her.

In two months, twenty-eight Kiev Jews, their wives, teenage sons, and sixteen Russian Uralians cleared the stables built, as they joked then, under Tsar Gorokha, from huge heaps of dung hardened like steel, repaired leaky roofs in some places, they built really spacious rooms, insulated them, concreted the floor, installed machine tools, installed electricity and plumbing. There were many difficulties. The people of Chelyabinsk could help.

After a short time, Leni's deputy, Semyon Ton carpet, built a dining room, luxurious toilets for that time, a shower room, and a rabbit hutch. He went to a suburban state farm and agreed on a direct exchange of goods for goods. For the waters, he repaired tractors, seeders, and the state farm tossed potatoes, onions, and carrots for this. On the day the first defense products were issued, the state farmers brought a pig weighing eighty kilograms as a gift to the factory workers.

In November, military representatives arrived in Kyshtym to receive finished products - blanks of projectile heads for tank guns. In the first month, only a hundred pieces were made. When I left the factory at the end of 1941, he issued 1200 projectile heads in two shifts - each for twelve hours. Multiply the above figure by '30 working days a month - worked seven days a week - and you get thirty-six thousand. In 1942, as my mother wrote to me at the front, they were released three times as many. Miracle!

Despite the meager food, bad front-line news, eternal fear for the children and relatives who fought, people

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silently, sometimes with clenched teeth, they performed their duties, looked for more and more reserves in themselves and others, and, what is quite surprising, they found them. And no one, not a single person, considered what they managed to do as a feat. That is why, until the Allies opened a second front, this is how the people called their rear. A noble goal, as history shows, is capable of much. She is ready to awaken superhuman energy in a person, endow him with titanic powers. It was!..

ABOUT MY BROTHERS

It's time to tell the reader about one more story. Using the example of my two brothers, I would like to show what is the role of fate in a person's life. A week before the war, I received the last letter from my cousin Mark. For more than a year he served in the Red Army. Mark's mother, my beloved aunt Berta, my father's sister, lived then in Kyiv. She persuaded a friend of the military commissar to leave her son to serve in the Kiev military district. She often visited her son in the unit. Mark was allowed to go home several times for a few days to "visit". Suddenly, the order - the division where he served, was urgently transferred closer to the border.

The second cousin, Igor, lived in Kharkov with his aunt. His mother died when the boy was seven years old, and his father, the Leningrad writer Vladimirovsky, having learned in [1937] that a "case" had been opened against him in the "big house", that is, in the NKVD, was frightened of arrest and hanged himself. There was no one to say a word for the "poor" conscript. He was drafted into the army in 1940 and sent to serve in the Far East, where he successfully spent the entire war, rose to the rank of senior lieutenant, took part in the Manchurian campaign against the Japanese in August 1945 and survived. After the war, he graduated from the Academy of Armored Forces in Moscow and, before retiring, commanded a tank regiment in the Ukraine with the rank of colonel.

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Mark's fate was different. Before the war, military censorship did not follow soldiers' letters so tightly. In the last letter, Mark told me about his unit, which was stationed near the border. He and his comrades were building a new line of defense almost around the clock. There was tension at the border. The soldiers saw how the Germans brought more and more units to her.

Meanwhile, as we now know, after the June TASS report, in order to give credibility to this deceitful statement, the "commander" ordered: all units moved to the border should be rendered incapacitated, the engines removed from aircraft, tanks, supposedly for phylaxis, send personnel to camps for exercises near the border. Literally a few hours before the start of the war, the Kremlin ordered: "Do not respond to provocations!" Such "wisdom" of Comrade Stalin cost the Red Army dearly. Mark had one year to serve. As soon as he was demobilized, he was going to come to me. In childhood and later, we were very good friends. Often met in Kyiv, in Kharkov. Mark dreamed of entering the Kiev Polytechnic Institute. Everything turned out differently. The war broke out and Mark disappeared.

I will briefly interrupt the story of my brother and tell another story. Trouble came to our family after the occupation of Kyiv by the Germans in the autumn of 1941. Bertha, Papa Ley's older sister, their children and grandchildren barely made it out of the city.

There remained Uncle Arl, Leah's husband, their daughter with her husband and three-year-old Vovochka, as well as other relatives. Uncle Arl, a middle-aged man highly respected by all, managed to convince the family circle not to leave Kyiv. He saw the Kaiser's army in 1918. "The Germans are intelligent people, decent and tidy," he said. "Everything will work out." My uncle's relatives were simple, modest, honest Jewish artisans. They stuffed empty cigarette cases with tobacco, made or sold hardware, and engaged in hairdressing or tailoring. Uncle Arl's daughter, Rivka, worked as an embroiderer in a garment factory. Religious precepts they are you

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filled with soul, exactly. They didn't read newspapers, they didn't listen to the radio. However, if they read newspapers or listened to the radio, would they read or hear a single word about the atrocities of the German army against the Jewish population? Wouldn't even a hint addressed to the Jews have reached them: "Go away, save yourself!" Many Ukrainians with whom Rivka worked urged not to believe the rumors about the murder of Jews in Zhytomyr, Vinnitsa, Berdichev. She persuaded herself: "Maybe something is really exaggerated in the rumors about German atrocities?"

As an example, I will cite a little story told to me by my friend. After the war, he visited his native place in Belarus, where he was born and spent his childhood. A few days before the invaders entered the town, the local baker Yankel went around the Jewish families and asked them for flour, poppy seeds, and butter. He decided to save the Jews, for which he was going to treat the Germans with unusually tasty poppy seed buns.

German tanks and motorcycles appeared soon. On the main street, tankers and motorcyclists were met by Jan kel and the most respected Jews. He handed them a pile of rolls on a huge platter. The column stopped for a few minutes, and, eating mouth-watering buns, the soldiers moved on. "Thank you" was out of the question.

- You see, you see! Yankel exclaimed joyfully, without despondency. - What a fine fellow I am! I saved you! Have you seen how appetizing gentlemen tankers ate my buns?

The Ukrainians, who had gone to the main street to meet the winners, cackled: "What did the Jews come up with!"

The next day, the Sonderkommando entered the town. She burned all the Jews and Yankel in the prayer house. How many similar stories have been preserved ... Many!

As it became known after the war, only ten percent of the Jewish population managed to evacuate. In general, during the rapid advance of the Germans in 1941, the evacuation of the population from cities and villages was not organized.

Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the Baltic states, the Leningrad region, etc. First of all, the parties fled

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nye and Soviet workers, employees of the NKVD, having previously killed all the prisoners. The story of the Smolensk party archive, which fell into the hands of the Germans in its entirety, is a clear example of this.

The fate of Uncle Arl, Rivka, her husband and Vovochka turned out to be tragic. In September 1941, they, among thirteen of my Kyiv relatives, died at Babi Yar.

The thought does not leave me: Stalin in that terrible 1941, although he himself at that time had no time for saving his "brothers and sisters", especially Jews, first of all saved his own power. He knew about the extermination of the Jewish population by the Germans. During the war years, 2.5 million Jews were killed in the Soviet territory occupied by the German army, and he was by no means going to save them.

The leader supposed, rather rejoiced at such a course of events - a gift from Hitler. "The more, the better," he said. A magnificent political find: all the black bloody work of clearing the Soviet Union of Jews will be done by the Nazis. Western countries, the world community and, of course, the Jewish people themselves will never forgive them for this. He, Stalin, will turn out to be a friend and savior of the Jews. In addition, the Secretary General thought, one cannot discount the following circumstance: "the extermination of the Jews will for a long time distract world public opinion from the Moscow trials in the pre-war years, from the Gulag, and so on" ...

In fact, that is what happened. The victory over Nazi Germany in World War II saved the Jewish people from final annihilation. Nobody denies that Stalin was one of the organizers of this Victory. True, there is another point of view: did we win the war not thanks to, but in spite of Stalin. It is reminiscent today of the position of the German generals who claim that Germany lost the war thanks to Hitler. The debate on this topic will continue. As the documents are declassified, the version I expressed is increasingly confirmed.

Let's get back to Mark's story. On the third day of fighting

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the regiment in which Mark served was defeated. Many commanders and Red Army men were taken prisoner, including Mark. On the very first night, when the protection of prisoners of war had not yet been established, Mark fled with two comrades. Their

no one was looking. For what? The German divisions were rapidly moving east. Tens of thousands of prisoners were herded, like cattle, to specially allotted plots of land, they were surrounded by barbed wire, machine guns were posted in the corners, sentries with machine guns were posted and the unfortunate people were counted by head, mainly for a report upstairs.

Until the end of 1942, Hitler did not allow Red Army prisoners of war to be sent to Germany, and by that time they numbered - just think - more than three million.

In October-November 1941, the Germans liberated more than 300 thousand prisoners of war: Ukrainians, Belarusians and Balts Comrade. A small part of the prisoners of war - "grooms" and "husbands" - they handed over to rural women. The rest, most of them, were sent to die in camps. Mostly they are Russian soldiers. The bulk of the prisoners of war - now it is known for sure - died during the winter of 1941/42. The Nazis actually killed almost the entire cadre of the Red Army. According to another version of mine, such a fact should have pleased Stalin. As he believed, the Germans themselves destroyed almost all the witnesses to his personal disgrace.

In recent years, in an attempt to rehabilitate the "brilliant" leader, some Russian official historians claim that the Supreme Commander-in-Chief did this, that is, he sacrificed a cadre army in order to gain time for the relocation of industry from the central regions of the USSR to the east. This version itself is blasphemous. But let's say, if it is accepted, then why would he call his army, abandoned to its will, which he had been preparing for two decades, in the event of captivity of soldiers and commanders, declared traitors?

For almost two months, Mark and his comrades made their way to the west; move east - they understood well - they

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do not reach yours. Once the fugitives stumbled upon the steering wheel of the German field gendarmerie. One of them was killed. Soon the remaining two reached Polish soil. They were hired by a wealthy Pole. For two years they "plowed" on his estate. He passed off prisoners of war as Poles, obtained documents for them for a bribe. In 1943, the German commandant's offices in the Polish General Government sent out an order: "For harboring fugitive Russian prisoners of war and Jews - execution!" The next morning, after receiving it in the commune! on receipt of a formidable circular, the frightened pan called the laborers into the upper room. He decently treated them, supplied them with bacon, bread, onions, salt for the journey, shod them in decent boots, dressed them in quilted jackets and said goodbye.

with them.

Now their path lay to the east. Went, hoping to get out

to the partisans. It was thought that Ukraine became calmer. When they set foot on Ukrainian soil, they did not yet know how entangled it was, like tentacles, by the occupying authorities, down to every village. Local policemen were on duty on the road, and in the villages, local elders controlled the life of the villagers. The old forester they met did not please the children with his story. We walked at night, determining the path by the stars. The main thing is that the weather does not let you down. Again, it seems to be luck ... Somewhere, closer to the Kiev region, they met partisan intelligence. The situation developed, as in the Soviet film by Yuri German "Check on the roads." Strict interrogation, and then "test in the case." In a shootout with punishers, Mark was wounded in the leg, and his comrade died. The partisans left without waiting for Mark, and he was left alone.

Hiding in a deep forest thicket, bandaging his leg, he spent the whole day there, and at night, leaning on a strong stick, he headed, as it seemed to him, towards Kiev. He wasn't wrong. A few days later, barely alive, with a swollen leg, he approached the village of Kolosenki, about a hundred and twenty kilometers from the Dnieper. Again, like luck: a familiar village. He recognized her immediately. In childhood, they were brought with their brother

'Gmina - local government.

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here for the summer. In the evening, through the bushes, Mark crawled to Trofim's hut, where they lived more than once, and softly knocked on the door.

Letting the wounded man into the semi-dark passage, Trofim lit up his face with a tallow cinder and immediately recognized his dacha resident. Having crossed himself, he embraced the soldier, helped him to enter the chamber, reassured him. His wife, Baba Mavra, fed Mark, gave him hot herbal tea to drink, and then set to work on the wound. She washed her, smeared her swollen leg with some homemade brew, tied clean, warm rags around her.

Mark spent four days hiding in the hayloft in the barn. On the fifth, confused, Trofim climbed into the hayloft and, bowing, asked Mark to forgive him. It turned out that he could no longer be with Trofim. The next day, as the headman told Trofim, the Germans would come to the village. The headman assigned four to him to stay. Farewell again, just like in Poland. Trofim supplied Mark with a piece of bacon, boiled potatoes, and onions for the journey, and handed over a jar of concoction from Baba Marfa to treat his leg. In the dark he released the guy with God. From that day on Mark disappeared.

How did I get this whole story?

After the war, when Aunt Berta returned to Kyiv, Trofim unexpectedly came to Podil, where she lived. That

Was he protecting himself just in case? Whether he betrayed Mark to the Germans - that's what we can't find out! Is it really with good and honest intentions, but he told his mother everything he knew about her son? Berta went to see him in the village. I hired a chaise. Together with Trofim, they traveled where, and where they went around on foot all the forests, fields, examined all the military paths. They went around hut after hut throughout the district, showing the villagers photographs of Mark in civilian clothes and in military uniform. They were looking for at least some pointing, albeit barely noticeable sign, a mound above the grave. Nothing... How many people like Mark, the so-called "missing" lies in the ground to this day - no one knows where? And the memory of them after the death of their loved ones goes forever into oblivion...

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"Is it any wonder that in the first weeks of the war millions of Red Army men were killed, wounded or taken prisoner? It is time, finally, to admit, at least to ourselves, that it was not love for the Motherland and Stalin that nevertheless won this war, but hatred for the enemy.

Mark Solonin

Chapter Two

HOW DID COMRADE STALIN DECEIVE
HIS "BROTHERS AND SISTERS"?
STALIN'S SPEECH
JULY 3, 1941

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On the twelfth day of the war, finally, the leader turned on the radio to his "brothers and sisters." After his speech, some things became clearer, some things even more confusing, but on the whole the overall picture of the beginning of the war looked dramatic. Millions of people in the Soviet Union and around the world were looking forward to this speech. As far as I remember, the majority took it with deep relief, at first they accepted Stalin's words as a program of action in the fight against the fascist invaders. But, having come to their senses, they thought. They began to ask themselves questions again and again. For example, why are border battles lost? How many years have people been assured from the highest tribunes that "the Soviet border is locked up"! Or such a natural question: "why are the Germans advancing so quickly, while the Red Army retreats even faster than the enemy"? and suffers losses much greater than the German army. — Ta-

whom history has not yet known. (Again, according to rumors.) Is the enemy really that strong? Where are our "falcons" and tank armadas - so many poems have been written about them, songs have been written, proud words have been said!

Lord, who to ask, who will answer?

At the time of the German attack on June 21, the Red Army

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had 3.3 million soldiers in the western districts. It had 25,479 tanks, of which 13,718 were in the western districts. Of the 4906 modern tanks, 2454 - T-34 and KV - were invulnerable at that time to German tanks, only the Kiev Special Military District had 4.3 thousand tanks, which meant that it had more tanks than the entire advancing army. This district alone had 2,000 aircraft, that is, half of the entire air force of the Luftwaffe. Almost half of them are aircraft of modern design. The Germans threw 4.3 million soldiers into the attack on the USSR, that is, it was a millimeter more than the Soviet side had. This was then their only advantage. So at least some historians think today, forgetting that on the main directions of the advancing forces the concentration of their forces exceeded the units of the Red Army by 4-6 times.

There was only one thing left - to believe Stalin's words and press. It is generally accepted that Stalin's speech was made at the most difficult hour of the war. But the dictator would not have done it if he did not think that the moment had come. K | July, 5 million 350 thousand people were already mobilized. It was on July 3 that mobilization was temporarily suspended. In terms of numbers, the Red Army surpassed the German one in approximately 8.5 million officers and soldiers.

The dictator constantly concealed from the people his Kremlin life and many events of foreign and domestic policy. One of them is the secret protocols between the USSR and Germany. On their basis, Stalin and Hitler divided the so-called "spheres of influence" among themselves. After that, the dictator immediately set about seizing new territories within the sphere of influence of the USSR: Eastern Poland, the Baltic countries, Western Ukraine, Moldova, Northern Bukovina ...

Stalin skillfully and deftly dispensed information. He partly resorted to demagoguery and falsification of facts and figures. At the same time, he determined what his subjects could know and what they did not want to know. For example, why should "brothers and sisters" know that Stalin and Hitler were the main perpetrators of the Second World War? Why Stalin and his

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political and military advisers allowed the defeat of the Red Army in the very first days of the war?

In his speech, the leader justified the conclusion of an agreement with the Germans, which allegedly gave the Soviet Union a year and a half of respite from the war. And then everything turned out logically and understandably: Hitler treacherously violated the treaty and unexpectedly attacked the Soviet Union. Further, even a lazy person could notice that in Stalin's logic, ends meet do not meet.

Hitler's attack really turned out to be treacherous, but it can by no means be considered unexpected. In his speech, Stalin admitted that 170 enemy divisions had been moved up to the Soviet borders and, having been mobilized, were in full combat readiness. What kind of "surprise" can we talk about then? The agreement with Hitler was concluded, according to many historians, with only one purpose - to provoke the Second World War. Here are a few fragments of Stalin's speech: "Despite the heroic resistance of the Red Army," said the leader, "despite the fact that the best divisions of the enemy and the best units of his aviation have already been beaten and found their grave on the battlefields, the enemy continues to climb forward, throwing new forces to the front.

"When will the Red Army stop the enemy?" people asked and could not answer. Another phrase from the speech: "The main forces of the Red Army, armed with thousands of tanks and planes, are entering the battle..." That is the answer to the question asked. This means that a turning point will soon come and the invaders will be thrown out of Soviet soil ... In those first days of the war, "brothers and sisters" sincerely believed the words of the leader. But it has long been known how far they were from the truth. In the first ten days of the war, the Germans captured or destroyed almost 75% of the military equipment of the Red Army, including tanks, aircraft, artillery, and small arms. Could anyone then believe that such a basically unthinkable event could happen? How little we knew about front-line affairs, but everyone at that time wanted to believe Comrade Stalin.

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In his speech, Stalin did not bypass the reasons for the first defeats. It turns out that the entire German army was fully mobilized, but ours was not. Is there something incomprehensible? Cunning leader. And the thing was this: the German army was brought into combat condition, but ours was not. Why? One of the main reasons for the defeat of the Red Army in the initial period of the war, as Stalin explained, was the unexpected advance of the aggressor. In reality: can the troops expect a surprise attack? What do they do in this case? And why do they exist? Attack without declaring war is an elementary practice in modern history. Didn't the Soviet troops, in a similar way, in August 1945

attacked Japan?

The attack on the USSR, it is true, turned out to be sudden. But how to understand this suddenness? Many people had knowledge of the enemy's intentions, from Stalin to the frontier districts. It is known that this information was forbidden to spread. The suddenness consisted in the fact that the troops did not put them on alert in time, the command of the armies in the main directions of attack was stunned by the enormous superiority of the enemy. Most of the district commanders did not know the plans for the defense of the state border, from the deployment of troops to the start of hostilities.

In modern literature, much attention is paid to "surprise" as the main reason for the defeats of the Soviet troops. "Due to the cowardice of Stalin," the Red Army "was in a state of complacency at the time of the German attack." Some historians note the effectiveness of disinformation, which was constantly resorted to by fascist diplomacy and propaganda. According to the historian I. Düllfer (Germany), "an insufficiently complete assessment of the possible intentions of the Wehrmacht" turned out to be effective in unleashing and waging the Second World War. In the face of the brutal spy mania in the USSR, Hitler was able to successfully deceive Stalin. For example, he assured the "leader" that the German troops, prepared for

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to fall on the USSR are allegedly located near a friendly power, since the British subjected them to air attacks in Central Germany.

The suddenness of June 22 meant not only the loss of most of the cadre army, but also huge material reserves, space and time, a sharp change in forces in favor of the enemy. This allowed the Wehrmacht to carry out a "blitzkrieg", on which Hitler placed, for the umpteenth time, the main bet for the defeat of the Red Army. Some historians, referring to the reason for the suddenness of the invasion, argue that this allegedly did not allow the army to be deployed for a counteroffensive. Subsequently, the point of view of "suddenness" prevailed in Russian historiography. In the Stalinist understanding, they accepted his concept of the "objective" (main) and subjective (secondary) causes of the defeats of the Red Army. However, on closer examination, all "objective" reasons are essentially subjective. The USSR was by no means doomed to the brutal defeats of 1941-1942 and immeasurable losses.

Before the war, Stalin constantly called on the army and the people to be ready for all sorts of surprises, in particular in his famous speech on May 5, 1941, but in reality the enemy's invasion slept through ...

In the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov, K.K. Rokossovsky, N.N. Voronov, K.S. Moskalenko, General L.M. Sandalov, it is shown, though a little bit, about the confusion of Stalin and his entourage on the eve and at the beginning of the war. It is known that the news of the capture of Minsk by the Germans led him to leave power for two days, to flee to his Kuntsevo dacha. In a difficult situation near Moscow, when the advanced German units were 13-15 kilometers away at the beginning of October 1941, G.K. Zhukov recalls that Stalin was, as never before, in complete confusion.

It is likely that the orders, as in the first period of the war and subsequently - No. 270, No. 272 - were generated by the personal grave psychological state of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, who gave them the only way out

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from the created, and more than once, difficult situation at the front. But let us return to Stalin's speech on 3 July.

In it, Comrade Stalin, addressing the "brothers and sisters", explained how they should behave with the invaders. "In the event of the forced withdrawal of Red Army units," Stalin said, "not to leave the enemy a kilogram of bread or a liter of fuel. The collective farmers must steal all the cattle, hand over the grain for safekeeping to state bodies for its export to the rear areas. All valuable property, including non-ferrous metals, grain and fuel, which cannot be taken out, must be unconditionally destroyed!!!>

And the leader also said: "In areas occupied by the enemy, it is necessary to create partisan detachments, horse and foot, to create sabotage groups to fight against parts of the enemy army, to kindle partisan war everywhere and everywhere, to blow up bridges, roads, damage telephone and telegraph communications, arson of forests, warehouses, convoys. In the occupied areas, create unbearable conditions for the enemy, and all his accomplices to persecute and destroy at every corner ... We must create a people's militia, raise all the working people to fight in order to protect our freedom, our honor and our Motherland with our breasts". It seems that the fiery appeal was composed in hysterical horror: burn everything, blow it up, poison it - destroy the whole country.

It was not difficult to draw two conclusions from Stalin's speech. First, that the Red Army will continue to retreat, but to what extent? And, secondly, it was not clear how it was possible to fulfill the instructions of the leader with such a rapid advance of the enemy, and especially of that part of the population that falls into occupation. After all, people have to live somehow...

A veteran once told me this story. His father, a communist, chairman of a Jewish collective farm, gathered all the cattle and, together with his fellow villagers, this is happening.

dilo in Belarus - he tried to drive him away from the advancing German army, that is, to follow the instructions of Comrade Stalin. Several times collective farmers with a herd were caught up

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Germans. And ordered them to return the cattle back. "This now belongs to Germany, this is ours!" the German officers told them. But the father managed to break away from the invaders and brought cows, horses, rams, goats to Kazakhstan. But that was a lucky one. Numerous attempts to destroy bread, grain, fuel, steal locomotives, wagons, dismantle plants and factories and send them to the eastern regions of the country did not always succeed. And some people didn't want to do that.

As an example, let us cite the alleged situation that has developed as a result of the occupation in one of the villages, say, in Ukraine or Belarus ... The Germans come to the village and, on the advice of the villagers, appoint a headman. Try it - give it up. Soon a non-German cavalry unit stops in the village. And then orders follow: someone washes clothes, someone takes out manure from the stables, someone works as dishwashers or waiters in the officer's canteen, someone digs up potatoes, shares them with the Germans, someone works at a mill, someone someone carpenters or shoves horseshoes for German horses at a rural forge - try not to!

A German teacher in a rural school, against her will, serves as a translator, and three young guys have been appointed to the police - try to refuse? But the time will come when the revived Red Army will come to this village. And the Smershevites will start dismantling: "who is who"? The teacher will be shot, the headman and the policemen will be sent to the Gulag, and not only them. And the woman who washed the soldiers' underwear, and the dishwashers, and even the "burial man", the peasant who buried the collective farmers.

Let's take a look at the diary of Joseph Goebbels, who praised Stalin's speech as an excellent propaganda document and even studied it for a while. What did this "greatest liar in the history of mankind" write down in his diary for July 3 and 4, 1941:

"... July 3, 1941. There is a lot of hype in connection with the planned flight of Stalin from Moscow ... Aman is already engaged in the creation of large newspapers in the occupied regions

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lasts. "Völkischer Beobachter" in Moscow - that would be something new!

July 4, 1941. Yesterday heavy English raids

aviation to North and West Germany. On the Eastern Front: the ring near Novogradok is tightly closed. Colossal trophies must be expected... In the remaining sectors of the front, the advance continues uninterrupted... But the Russians are still fighting very stubbornly and fiercely... Our losses, in relation to the scale of operations, are still insignificant. Magnificent position on the Central Front. Here the enemy also becomes less stable... The Russians suffer heavy losses in aircraft. They no longer dare to make night raids on our eastern cities. Their ally is still Slavic stubbornness. But it also disappeared one day. Stalin gives a speech early in the morning: a defensive speech of bad conscience, saturated with deep pessimism. He describes the seriousness of the situation, calls for sabotage of our progress and warns against alarmists and enemy rumors being spread... Abroad, primarily in the United States, but also in London, the situation of Moscow is seen in a gloomy light. They think that one of the greatest battles of annihilation in history is about to begin. The losses of the Russians in the Bialystok "cauldron" are monstrous... A blow to Moscow... It seems that the resistance of the Reds along the entire front is slowly breaking down... Stalin called for the crops and supplies to be burned. We answer this quite openly that Russia has nothing to expect from us after the defeat and we will leave her to die of hunger. Probably, this will cool too hot heads.

New news arrives every half an hour. Wild, exciting time. In the evening the newsreel is ready... I napped on the terrace for another half an hour," Goebbels ends the recording of the day.

How much bragging... At the same time, Goebbels begins to understand that the war in Russia is not a walk, not easy, poor battles in France and Poland.

As I noticed, deep unrest reigned in Moscow.

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in, a misunderstanding of the reasons for the destruction of the first echelon of the Red Army, and sometimes some inexplicable fear and confusion. At the same time, in those first hours, the tragic days of the war, I never heard a single reproach against the authorities. Rather, some kind of impersonal anger, not yet fully realized, grew. The war caught both the older and the younger generation, probably everyone by surprise. Someone did not have time to finish school or college, someone did not celebrate their wedding on time, did not go to say goodbye to their dying mother, someone, having worked without rest for three years, finally got ready to go on vacation, and someone did not manage to garden or vegetable garden... The list of unfinished, unfinished business can be continued endlessly - the war burst into people's lives so unexpectedly...

Often to this day people in the East and in the West,

especially young people who are interested in the past war ask the question: "Did Stalin know in advance about Hitler's decision to attack the Soviet Union?" Knew! Everyone knew!

According to historians, in a year or a year and a half (1940-1941), the Soviet leadership received more than two hundred warnings from various sources about the preparation of Nazi Germany for war. This is both the American State Department and the British government. These are various diplomatic channels, and intelligence, and Soviet border troops, and anti-fascist circles in Western Europe.

The dictator - now it is known for sure - criminally neglected all the reports he received, did not draw the necessary political and military conclusions. He did not secure the "brothers and sisters", did not bring the Red Army on alert in time. His political and military advisers, in the conditions of general fear and servility created by the dictator in the country and the army, did not contradict him, silently, meekly agreed with him.

"War," writes Winston Churchill, "is primarily a list of mistakes, but history hardly knows a mistake equal to that made by Stalin..."

In connection with what Churchill said, the behavior of Maisky, the Soviet ambassador in London, is not without interest.

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After a conversation with him at the British Foreign Office on June 13, 1941, where he was informed of Hitler's impending attack on the USSR, Maisky informed Moscow: "The whole picture ... seems to me more than hypothetical ... I still consider the German attack on the USSR is very unlikely."

Stalin feared most of all that the slightest carelessness or provocation would deprive him of any chance of delaying the start of the war, which he so needed.

Let us compare Stalin's and Churchill's approaches to intelligence reports. Stalin rarely read primary sources, more often he ignored intelligence reports, considering them as disinformation. "He trusted Hitler more than himself," scouts joked. He demanded that intelligence advisers (Beria, Merkulov, Golikov) draw up reports based on primary sources. Golikov, compiling reports, as a rule, divided them into two sheets. In the first, he cited messages worthy of attention, in the second - alleged disinformation. Stalin often, when receiving his assistants, rudely interrupted them, did not accept their most serious arguments about the imminent danger.

Winston Churchill became prime minister during the most difficult days of Britain, when the country was attacked by the huge air power of Germany, and Hitler was actively preparing

headed for Operation "Sea Lion" - the landing of the Wehrmacht on the Island.

Churchill considered that intelligence information for him was one of the most important means of control in the war against the Nazis. Instructed to provide him with all primary sources. And what is important or not - he will decide for himself. So he was able, for example, to "calculate" the preparation of an attack on the USSR. Based on one of them (April 6, 1941), Churchill warned Stalin. Stalin did not receive the British ambassador. He received news from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs 3 weeks later that he had informed Stalin about them.

"The high command had information about the German plans to strike at the Soviet troops north of the Pripyat marshes, as well as about the attack

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capture by especially strong tank wedges from the Warsaw region and to the north of it with the tasks of defeating the Russian forces in Belarus, etc. Why did the Soviet General Staff concentrate rather strong groupings of troops in the Bialystok and Lvov salients? You don't have to be a strategist to answer this question. Even a cursory glance at the configuration of the Soviet-German frontier (the line of the future front) shows the possibility of using the Bialystok and Lvov salients to inflict much promising concentric blows on the Germans here. The General Staff could not but use such a chance. But, as you know, since the battle of Cannae (216 BC), an alluring ledge, under certain conditions, can turn into a devouring "cauldron". It was in these "cauldrons" that the troops of the Red Army found themselves. The triumph of the German command became the simultaneous tragedy of hundreds of thousands of Soviet Warriors.

On February 2, 1941, the regrouping of German troops began with the aim of striking at the USSR. Stalin knew about the concentration of forces and means on the German side. Thanks to intelligence sources, he knew ahead of time that Germany was preparing for war. He also knew the start date. To this day, disputes continue about why, having comprehensive information, he did not prepare the country for defense, did not take the only logical decision in this situation - to put the army on alert?!

Perhaps he sought to "outplay" Hitler and was sure that he would succeed. He boundlessly believed in the colossal power of the Red Army: most often, to this day, historians suggest that Stalin was sure that until Hitler dealt with England, he would not dare to unleash a war on two fronts.

After the end of the war, the French historian professional

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Danilov V. D. Stalin's strategy for the outbreak of war: Plans and Reality", "National History", 1995, No. 3, VIr:

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Sir Cartier, turning to the study of archival materials of the Nuremberg trials, found in them documents confirming Stalin's delusions. Finally, the failure of his bets on the Axis countries with a complete break with the countries of democracy. The memoirs of his comrades-in-arms have been preserved about this.

I would like to draw the reader's attention to two questions. It is even impossible to imagine how events in the Second World War would have unfolded in the future if Hitler had agreed to Stalin's demand and the Soviet Union would have joined the Axis countries. Great happiness, this absurdity did not happen. In this case, it is difficult to determine who was wiser: Hitler or Stalin? And the second question: I think that Stalin, absolutely confident in the victory over Hitler, did everything possible that was in his power to delay the outbreak of war. Day after day, he himself was preparing to attack Nazi Germany. This is evidenced by many facts that Russian and Western historians have told about in recent years in their books (Viktor Suvorov, Boris Kuznetsov, Joachim Hoffman, Mark Solomon, V. Danilov, A. Afanasiev, and others).

Until the very last minute, Stalin tried to persuade himself that Hitler would not attack. Even when, on June 22, at 5:30 am, German Ambassador Schulenburg handed Molotov a note declaring war on the USSR by Germany, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in the most ridiculous, pitifully unclear way, what he was counting on, began to convince him that there was no concentration of Red Army troops on the border , persuaded, like a child, that any difficulties in interstate relations can be settled diplomatically with good will.

One of Stalin's biggest miscalculations before the start of the upcoming war, which he spoke about more than once in his speeches, was the decapitation of the Red Army. In his speech, the leader, of course, did not say a word about this tragic event, about his crime.

leniya.

According to Hoffmann, in a complex foreign policy

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In the current situation, the Armed Forces of the USSR were "to the core shaken by Stalin's purges." It was "a morbid manifestation, a form of collective

descent." He rejects the lie about Soviet marshals as spies, admits Stalin's desire to strengthen his power with the help of these assassinations. One thing is clear: "If it were not for the defeat of the military personnel," General A.V. Gorbatov argued, "we would not have allowed the Germans to the Volga, to the Dnieper." "Without the thirty-seventh year," according to A.M. Vasilevsky, "perhaps there would have been no war at all in the forty-first year. The destruction of most of the commanders and, to a large extent, as a result, the sharp weakening of the army, revealed in the Soviet-Finnish war, decisively accelerated the attack of Germany and its allies on the USSR. "The Finnish war," recalled Vasilevsky, "was a great shame for us and created a deeply unfavorable impression on our army abroad at the JOM."

Before the war, an "ideal" command and control system was created in the Red Army and actively maintained in the initial period. "Ideal" for the "destruction" of their own troops. No Hitler could have come up with a better system. She worked like this. When the Germans advanced, the commander of the Soviet regiment reported the situation to the division headquarters and waited for an order on what to do next. The division transmitted information to the army headquarters and waited for the command what to do next. Army to the headquarters of the front, from there - to Headquarters. The Stavka reported to Stalin and only after he made the appropriate decision did they develop a plan of action. This plan was brought to the fronts, where they developed their plans and sent their army, etc. In short, all this took from 6 to 10 days.

On the day of the attack by the Nazi army on the USSR, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke in the House of Commons and delivered his historic speech about supporting Russia in the fight against Nazism. Stalin never believed Churchill, but he believed Hitler. I had to change my ratings. He carefully read Churchill's speech and that was it.

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embassy and intelligence reports from London. He ordered the British Prime Minister's speech to be published in the shortest position.

In his memoirs The Second World War, Churchill cites an interesting episode:

"In August 1942, I first heard from Stalin: "None of us ever trusted the Germans. For us, it has always been a matter of life or death."

It's a lie! One can cite many Stalinist statements of an opposite nature.

The most surprising thing is the behavior of the dictator on the night of June 22, 1941: despite the exact intelligence data on the timing of the start of the war, as well as information received for

a few hours before the attack from two German defectors, OH did not tell his "brothers and sisters" how he slept through this very "treacherous attack" of mine ...

HOW COMRADE STALIN SLEEPED THE GERMAN ARMY ATTACK TO HIS COUNTRY

In the book "Memoirs and Reflections", published many years later without cuts, G.K. Zhukov described this event: "At 3 hours 15 minutes on June 22, hail bombs from the armada of German aircraft comrade. At 03:30, artillery shelling began along the entire German-Soviet border. And Comrade Stalin slept soundly surrounded by guards at his dacha in Kuntsevo. The People's Commissar ordered me to call Stalin. I'm calling. No one approaches the background. I call continuously. Finally, I hear the sleepy voice of General Vlasik, head of the security department:

— Who is speaking?

- Chief of the General Staff Zhukov. I ask you to connect me with Comrade Stalin.

- What? Now? - the head of security was surprised. "Comrade Stalin is sleeping.

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- Wake up immediately: the Germans are bombing our cities, the war has begun. There is silence for a few moments. Finally, they answered dully on the phone:

- Wait.

About three minutes later, Stalin approached the apparatus. I reported the situation and asked for permission to start retaliatory combat operations. Stalin is silent. I can only hear his heavy breathing.

- Do you understand me? - Silence again.

- Will there be instructions? I insist. Finally, as if waking up, Stalin asked:

- Where is the commissar?

- He speaks on HF with the Kyiv district.

- Go with Tymoshenko to the Kremlin. Tell Poskre Byshev to call all the members of the Politburo."

The meeting of the Politburo began at 5:45 a.m.

and lasted over 3 hours. Stalin was pale and sat at the table, holding a pipe not stuffed with tobacco in his hand. Zhukov and Timoshenko reported the situation. Stalin suddenly asked:

Isn't this a provocation of the German generals?

The Germans are bombing our cities in the Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltics. What kind of provocation is this? Timoshenko answered.

"If it is necessary to organize a provocation, then the German generals bombard their cities as well," said Stalin, and after thinking for a while, he continued: "Hitler certainly does not know about this. We need to urgently call the German embassy." (Interesting dialogue, isn't it?)

STALIN IN THE FIRST HOURS OF THE WAR

Stalin's behavior in the first hours of the war is incomprehensibly absurd, reckless. It clearly indicates that he believed in a personal letter from Hitler, which he received not

¹In the first edition, this episode was censored. (Author's note)

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long before the start of the war. He clung helplessly to the smallest straw that could prevent what had happened. We did not talk about the TASS publication of June 14, 1941. First of all, we are talking about absurd attempts to contact Hitler, about Molotov's desire, on Stalin's instructions, to try to find out from the German ambassador Schullenburg whether what happened was not a provocation by Hitler's German generals. Stalin could not understand that something irreparable had happened.

Let us turn to the memoirs of General Meretskov. He tells in them about the alarming situation that prevailed in the highest circles of the Red Army on the eve of the war. "Already on June 21," recalls Meretskov, "the military leadership behaved as if the war would start tomorrow." Meretskov left by train for Leningrad on the night of June 22. On the eve of his departure from Moscow, he met with Defense Minister S.K. Timoshenko. Let's read further about what Meretskov says about this meeting:

"I was summoned to my immediate superior, the people's commissar for defense, who had been in a particularly tense state for the last few days. And although I understood the reason for his nervous state, although I saw with my own eyes what was happening on the western border, the words of the people's commissar entered my consciousness with unusual sharpness and anxiety. Timoshenko said then:

"Perhaps the war will start tomorrow!" You need to be in the capacity of the representative of the High Command in the Leningrad Military District. You know his troops well and will be able to help the leadership of the district if necessary. The main thing - again, do not succumb to provocations.

What are my powers in the event of an armed attack? I asked.

- Resilience first. Be able to distinguish a real attack from local incidents and prevent them from escalating into a war. But be on alert. In the event of an attack, you yourself know what to do.

Strange, again the fear of some kind of "provocation"! (On which you cannot immediately open fire!) If the country

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prepared only for defense, then any talk of "provocations" would be meaningless. The order should be simple and short: "The attacking enemy is destroyed!" Or, for example, on the evening of June 21, People's Commissar of the Navy Admiral Kuznetsov ordered three fleets and two flotillas: "Operational readiness number one, immediately!" [By the way, operational readiness No. 1 is announced after operational readiness No. 2, which was announced on June 19, 1941, but historiographers do not like to remember this).

Consider the first three directives sent from the Kremlin to the military districts on the eve of June 22, 1941.

Directive No. 1 was drawn up after a three-hour discussion with the military in Stalin's office on June 21, 1941. She warned the troops that a German attack was not ruled out during June 22-23. Perhaps it will come from provocative actions. Therefore, being in full combat readiness, one should not succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications. The transmission to the border districts began in encrypted form after 11 p.m. and ended, according to Zhukov, at 00:30 on June 22. She arrived at the headquarters of armies, corps and divisions by two in the morning and much later. No one was able to manage to do anything real: there was only a matter of time left before the start of the German offensive. Stalin, having calmed down, went to his Kuntsevskaia dacha and went to bed, again, relying on his decision.

Directive No. 2 appeared on the morning of June 22, after Stalin got acquainted with Hitler's note. Nevertheless, the military convinced him that this was not about individual "provocations", but about a real war itself.

"A powerful blow from bombers and fighters

Russian aviation," it said, "destroy aviation at enemy airfields and bomb the main groups of his ground troops..." The directive demanded -

| Meretskoy. In the service of the people. M. 1968. S. 209.

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to bomb the ports of Memel and Königsberg... And again, in Stalin's wording, the old motive: "... From now on, until further notice, the ground troops will not cross the border." Idiocy! But who is able to explain it in that day?

This directive, signed by Timoshenko, Zhukov! and Malenkov, was sent from Moscow at 7:15 am, that is, more than a couple of hours after the Wehrmacht invasion. She arrived at the front between 9 and 10 o'clock in the morning. In the time since the beginning of the invasion, the German troops, having easily crossed the border strip, moved in three directions: to Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad... In the memoirs written after the war, the German of the Red Army's ability to neither defend nor advance. Who is guilty? "Brothers and sisters" should not think about this.

On the same day, Directive No. 3 was issued. For the first time, demands appeared in it "for the troops to go on a counteroffensive to defeat the enemy and enter his territory, where, by the end of June 24, destroy the main enemy groupings." Finally, Stalin graciously allowed the troops to cross the border (which no longer exists) "and conduct operations without being embarrassed by the borders." This directive was sent from Moscow on June 22 at about 9 pm. She entered the fronts from 10 pm to midnight on June 23. All three Directives can be safely compared to a blank shot. How the front accepted them is understandable. They testify that neither Stalin, nor his political puppets, nor the military - none of them knew the actual front-line situation. He did not understand what was happening there, which means that there was no command and control of troops in the conditions of a surprise attack. Tell me, how could Stalin tell such "brothers and sisters"?

The first day of the war was lost and, more precisely, lost to the Wehrmacht.

In these days, the troops of the border districts found themselves in a catastrophic situation not in separate sectors, but

| Zhukov these days was on the Southwestern Front.

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on a vast expanse stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. In other words, Stalin's "absurd, or rather criminal orders" became the main reason for the lack of mobilization of our troops and the suddenness of the enemy's strike.

And on the fronts (Northern, Western and Southwestern), this is what happened ... Several sketches, stories of eyewitnesses and participants in the battles.

Soldiers talk about the demoralization of the army, about the absence of any leadership. So, according to the testimony of F.Ya. By June 15, there were about 900 people in the unit with 40 rifles for guard duty. There were only 12 drivers for 50 cars received a week before the start of the war. Anti-tank guns never arrived at the unit. F.Ya. Cheron recalls: "At 4 o'clock in the morning on June 22, by order, everyone rushed into the forest and began to hide under the bushes and behind the trees. After 30 minutes it became clear that no one was chasing us. It was then that we were told that the Germans had crossed the border and were moving in our direction. After several hours in the forest, it was announced that it was possible to return. Without any order, groups wandered into the unit. Order and discipline crumbled before our eyes. No one else lined us up. A clothing warehouse was opened, and everyone was allowed to take whatever they wanted. It was about 11 o'clock in the afternoon. The command staff was not visible. I still have no idea where the commanders have gone. The Red Army soldiers wandered aimlessly and did not know what to do.

Probably, the senior commanders were simply afraid of the responsibility and did not know how to fight with 900 unarmed and untrained soldiers who did not even hold Lee in their hands with rifles. The junior commanders unsuccessfully tried to organize the soldiers. The resulting chaos turned into a Disorganized Flight. Further, F.Ya. Cheron writes: "... people were walking, driving, running everywhere, fleeing from the Germans.

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Instead of an army, there was a crowd. Somewhere not far from Baranovichi and near Slonim, the roads from Brest and Bialystok converged like a wedge in a large forest. There were several hundred cars, if not thousands. Many cars were already with empty tanks. Here for the first time I saw an attempt by some colonel to stop a senseless flight. He stood in the back of the car, shouting that it was a shame, that we should organize defense. Probably, he himself was embarrassed, because there was nothing to defend. Only a few approached the car where the colonel was standing and listened to him. The bulk of the people began to move away and look for where to go. Most of the military had no weapons ... The army no longer existed. There were disunited groups in

five, six or more people. The forests and fields of Belorussia swarmed with them. Towards the evening of June 24, soldiers were already encountered dressed in civilian clothes and without weapons. Hunger took its toll, and all the villages that they met on the way became full of people begging for something to eat from the local population. Most of the time there was nothing but water. Probably, the demoralized soldiers did not think about captivity and were not going to surrender. However, if the soldier is abandoned by the commander and there is no weapon, how to fight?

A similar situation was characteristic of all sectors of the Soviet-German front. The morale of the army, especially the encircled units, quickly fell. Many commanders committed suicide or deliberately went under the bullets - they were looking for death. The concept of military duty and honor, of army morality and ethics was destroyed. One can cite a lot of evidence that "some commanders began to take off their sleepers and cubes and sketch their contours that did not fade in the sun with ink pencils, allegedly fearing to attract enemy snipers with the shine of insignia, political instructors also hastily parted with their sleeve patches - asterisks".

Here is another document - "Message of the NKVD of the USSR No. 41.303 to the GKO":

"... on July 6, she was defeated at Novo-Miropol, according to

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suffering heavy losses in people and materiel, the 199th

a rifle division ... During the panic created in the subunits during the enemy offensive, the command failed to prevent the flight. The divisional headquarters fled. Division commander Alekseev, deputy. political commander Korzhev and early. The headquarters of the German division left the regiments and fled to the rear with the remnants of the headquarters. Division commander Colonel Alekseev, deputy. division commander for political affairs, regimental commissar Korzhev and early. division headquarters lieutenant colonel German were arrested and tried by a military tribunal.

Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR
Abakumov.

According to Alexander Yakovlev, a former member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU, during the war years, 954 thousand soldiers and officers were shot in the Soviet Army - almost a million people! If we consider all these reprisals fair, then it turns out that the Russians are the meanest and most cowardly people, because no other army knew such a percentage of those executed for treachery and cowardice!

He spoke in detail about what happened in the hot July-August and September days at the front.

Mark Solonin.

Just in case, Timoshenko was put at the head of the Stavka (if you have to look for a "scapegoat"), although without the permission of Stalin, a modest member of the Stavka, the military could not take a single step. In the same period, until November 1941, Stalin's name is rarely mentioned in newspapers, his portraits are nowhere to be seen.

Finally, Stalin realized what had happened. He no longer believed in his army, or rather, in the one that, in fact, basically surrendered to the Wehrmacht. From here a strange phrase was born: "We do not have prisoners of war, we have traitors, betrayals of NIKI."

There are memories that G.K. Zhukov offered Stalin to bring down a preliminary strike on the Wehrmacht troops concentrated on the Soviet border. Stalin categorically rejected this proposal. How to factory

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born by a cobra, repeated and repeated: "Do not give in to provocations ..."
Where did this word come from in his vocabulary? Let us turn to Hitler's personal letter to Stalin on May 14, 1941. Here is a small excerpt from this letter, which "bewitched" Stalin:

"During the formation of the invasion forces far from the eyes and aircraft of the enemy, as well as in connection with recent operations in the Balkans, a large number of my troops, about 80 divisions, have accumulated along the border with the Soviet Union, which may have given rise to the rumors circulating now about the probable military conflict between us. I assure you on the honor of the head of state that this is not the case. For my part, I am also sympathetic to the fact that you cannot completely ignore these rumors and have also concentrated a sufficient number of your troops on the border. Thus, without our desire, but solely due to the prevailing circumstances, very large groupings of troops are confronting each other on our borders. They confront in an atmosphere of increasing tension of rumors and conjectures pumped up by English sources. In such a situation, I do not at all rule out the possibility of an accidental outbreak of an armed conflict, which, under conditions of such a concentration of troops, can take on very large dimensions, when it will be difficult or simply impossible to determine what was its root cause. It will be no less difficult to stop this conflict. I want to be very frank with you. I fear that one of my generals will deliberately enter into such a conflict in order to save England from her fate and frustrate my plans. It's only about one month. Around June 15-20, I plan to begin a massive transfer of troops to the west from your border. At the same time, I most convincingly ask you not to succumb to any provocations that may take place with

side of my oblivious generals. And, of course, try not to give them any reason. If provocations by any of my generals cannot be avoided, I ask you to show restraint, do not

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take retaliatory actions and immediately report the incident to me through a communication channel known to you ... ".

Briefly acquaint readers with "Hitler's directive on declaring war on the Soviet Union." For many years, Stalin and after him the Soviet leaders hid this document from the "brothers and sisters" and did not publish it in the press. Now anyone who wishes can find out how Hitler explained the attack on the USSR. What, in essence, were Hitler's claims to the USSR, for the sake of which the Nazis rushed to Russia? We list the main ones:

- violation of the contract of obligations on the division of spheres of influence: first of all, this concerns Lithuania, captured by Moscow;
- an attempt to occupy Finland;
- a grandiose concentration of Soviet troops on the western border, where, according to German intelligence, more than 160 divisions were concentrated;
- the capture by Soviet troops of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina;
- the desire of the Russians to send troops to Bulgaria;
- Russia's attempts to gain a foothold in the Dardanelles;
- subversive actions of the Soviet government in Bulgaria and Romania;
- the active participation of Soviet Russia in the Yugoslav conflict, the organization of the coup d'état in Yugoslavia;
- anti-German actions in the Soviet Union.

Most of all, it seems to me, Hitler's personal views in connection with the decision to attack the USSR are characterized by a letter written by him on the eve of June 22, 1941 to Mussolini. I will quote one paragraph from it. But it seems to me that it is very important for understanding Hitler's mood at the moment when, after much deliberation, he decided to break completely with Stalin. Historians still, trying to explain the beginning of the war, ask the question: who "beat" whom, Stalin Hitler or Hitler Stalin? It's mostly about timing. Unfortunately, until now, any documents that would shed light on this historical situation

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tion, are unlikely to become declassified in the near future. Let's go back to Hitler's letter.

"I feel myself," writes Hitler, "inwardly free again... Collaboration with the Soviet Union, with all the sincere desire to achieve final detente, often weighed me down. For it seemed to be a break with my whole past, my worldview and my past commitments. I am happy that I have been freed from this moral burden.

Military-historical literature claims that the General Staff allegedly made a major miscalculation by placing the main stocks of materiel near the state border. As is known, from the first hours of the war they found themselves in the enemy's fire zone. After two weeks of the war, about 200 warehouses with fuel, ammunition and weapons were on the territory captured by the Germans. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that the retreating troops had to destroy a significant amount of materiel.

By mid-July 1941, out of 170 Soviet divisions that took the first blow from the German military machine, 28 were completely defeated, 70 divisions lost over 50% of their personnel and equipment. Particularly severe losses were suffered by the troops of the Western Front. Of the total number of divisions destroyed on the Soviet-German front, 24 were part of this front. The remaining 20 divisions of this front also found themselves in a catastrophic situation. They lost in manpower and means from 50 to 90%. During the first three weeks of the war, the Red Army lost a huge amount of military equipment and weapons. In divisions alone (without taking into account increased combat support), losses amounted to about 6,500 guns of 76 mm caliber and above, and more than 3,000 antitank defense guns. During the first three weeks of the war, the Southwestern Front destroyed 1,933 wagonloads of ammunition and 38,047 tons of fuel. As sad as it is to admit, the placement

| Solonin M. June 23: M. M. Day: Yauza, Eksmo, 2007. S. 507.

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material resources near the border was not a simple miscalculation, but was dictated by the need for effective support for the advancing troops, more precisely, the planned offensive.

By the end of 1941, the Red Army had lost practically the entire first strategic echelon - the most trained personnel troops. Only prisoners of war

as it is now established, about 3.9 million people. By July 10, German troops advanced deep into Soviet territory: in the main, Western, direction - 450-600 km at a rate of advance of 25-35 km per day, in the North-West direction - 450-500 km at a rate of 25-30 km per day, in the South-West direction - by 300-350 km at a rate of 16-20 km per day. For comparison: the losses of the Wehrmacht during this period amounted to about 40% of the tanks of the original composition, of which 20% were combat losses, 900 aircraft in the Baltic - 4 minelayers, 2 torpedo boats and | "hunter". According to German data, the losses of the Wehrmacht in personnel amounted to about 100 thousand people killed, wounded and missing. Such losses of the Germans, although they significantly exceeded their losses in previous battles in Western Europe, were in no way comparable to the losses of the Soviet troops.

In connection with the above, the question arises: what is the reason for the tragedy of June 22? Among many factors, the "mistakes" and "miscalculations" of the Soviet military-political leadership are usually named. But on closer examination, some of them turn out not to be naive delusions at all, but the result of well-thought-out measures for the purpose of preparing a preemptive strike and subsequent offensive operations against Germany. It was to this strategic plan that the principle of the operational formation of the troops of the first strategic echelon was subordinated. In fact, the war had to be started in conditions of a powerful unexpected blow from the enemy with unorganized defensive actions. Besides

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the same troops, almost everywhere taken by surprise '.

For many years, the "beginning of the war" was hushed up in Russian historiography. Only in recent years, especially on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Victory, did the Russian press publish many materials on the tragedy of 1941. However, alas, the full story of the beginning of the war has not yet been disclosed. First of all, this is explained by the classification of many archival documents: the Politburo, the Headquarters, the General Staff, the KGB and SMERSH. And how many documents were destroyed, how many were forged!

Unfortunately, in the general's memoirs, with the exception of some of them, the history of 1941 is poorly touched upon. I rarely met in the troops of 1942-1945 soldiers who remained in the ranks after the first year of the war. Some of the officers survived, and I communicated with them, trying to understand their difficult initial military experience. But they, as a rule, left the conversation.

Recently, books have come out of print that are worthy of the reader's attention and explain in many respects what

actually happened at the beginning of the war. Among them, the work of the Russian historian Boris Sokolov and the German historian Joachim Hoffmann is of particular value. (Boris Sokolov. "Red Colossus. Why didn't the Red Army dine?" M.: Yauza Publishing House, Eksmo, 2007; Jochim Hoffman, "Stalin's War of Annihilation. Planning, Implementation, Documents." M.: Publishing house "AST", "Astrel", 2006.)

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of publishing a document hidden for many years called "Considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies." This is how the well-known progressive Russian historian Yuri Afanasiev assesses the "Considerations": "This document, as they say in one of its last

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Danilov V. D. Stalin's strategy for the outbreak of war: Plans and reality. "National history". 1995. No. 3.

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publications, "is a 15-page manuscript of standard typewriter paper, written in black ink by Major General A.M. Vasilevsky. Under the document, the places for the signatures of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union S.K. Timoshenko and the Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army G.K. Zhukova. However, they did not sign the document." According to other publications, this document was submitted by G.K. Zhukov for consideration by I.V. Stalin. In our country, this document was first published with abbreviations in 1992 by N.V. Kiselev, and completely - in 1993 by Yu.A. Gorkov. Questions regarding the Considerations boil down mainly to when, on what date, and by whom this document was written, who made what amendments to it, whether it was of a working, active character, or was it developed only "just in case", as one of strategy options for the coming war. On the whole, the document does not so much raise questions as it poses new problems for researchers. The "Considerations" leave no doubt that, approximately in the spring of 1941, the Soviet leadership shifted its focus from defense strategy to large-scale preparations for a pre-emptive strike against Germany. Even if we assume that the document was not valid, since it was allegedly not signed by anyone, then in this case problems remain: the mobilization of troops, their hidden concentration on the western border, the disarmament of fortified areas on the old border, the movement of military depots to the west, extensive construction of airfields near the western border - these and many other facts and events of May-June 1941 unfolded in strict accordance with the instructions of the Considerations. Foreign and many authoritative Russian historians believe that Stalin, beginning at least in the spring of 1941]

devastating blow to Germany. Moreover, in the most recent publications in Russia on the history of the Second World War, quite convincing justifications are given that "the idea of a preemptive strike against Germany would

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la the only real and quite legitimate. And even more definitely: "A preemptive strike would have saved millions of lives and, perhaps, would have led much earlier to the same political results that the country, ruined, hungry, cold, having lost the color of the nation, came in 1945, raising the Banner of Victory over Reichstag." So that there is no doubt about this, the final conclusion is made: "And the fact that such a blow was not delivered, that the offensive doctrine, carefully developed in the General Staff of the Red Army and began to be implemented in May-June 1941, was not implemented is perhaps one of Stalin's major strategic miscalculations." As a result, the almost complete defeat and capture of two fronts: first the Western in July 1941, then, in August - the South-Western; the defeat in summer and autumn of more than 300 of our divisions, numbering over 5 million men; loss every week of 30-35 divisions; the destruction by the enemy in three weeks of 3,500 aircraft, 6,000 tanks, more than 20,000 guns and mortars—such a grandiose catastrophe could have occurred, obviously, not only because of individual, albeit major, miscalculations, not because of primitively interpreted surprise.

The tragic history of 1941 was revealed in the deepest way by the Samara historian, or rather aviation engineer Mark Solonin? He went beyond the journalism of Rezun-Suvorov. Suvorov's "Icebreaker" caused numerous controversies, critical views, but the position of the author in it occupies a large place. I do not adhere to the point of view that is supported by the words of Yuri Fel

shtinsky:

"Among the bureaucracy and banalism of ideas and people, whose books you will never distinguish from each other if you tear out the title pages of the volumes written by them, Viktor Suvorov's works "Icebreaker" and "Den M" are an outstanding phenomenon. And precisely because the author of these books never

| Afanasiev Yu. Another war and memory. 2? Solonin
M. July 23.

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no matter what convinces a large army of professional historians, I am writing these lines - in defense of history, in defense of truth, in defense of the author of such extraordinary books.' I am writing with gratitude and jealousy, because I myself

quite a long time ago, even before V. Suvorov's articles began to appear in Russian Thought, he came to the conclusion that, "of course," Stalin himself was going to attack Hitler. And this is the only way to explain his behavior in 1939-1941.

Mark Solonin spent fifteen years, almost without using archival data, to reveal and show the reality of June 22 and later - in all the main directions of the enemy offensive.

Viktor Suvorov characterizes his book as follows: "Mark Solonin accomplished a scientific feat, and what he writes and what he does is a "golden brick" in the foundation of the history of the war that will someday be written."

We will not retell the content of Mark Solonin's books. It is available to everyone. And the interested reader can refer to them himself. The game is worth the candle!

What is this "golden brick"? Here is an article by Mark Solonin, published by him in the journal Ogonyok. It outlines the author's main conclusions about the causes of the tragic start of the war. I quote the article in abbreviation:

"Go, what happened on June 22, 1941, was the beginning of the largest and, perhaps, the most shameful catastrophe in the entire period of Soviet history. And although Soviet propaganda tried for decades to wash away this sense of shame, disgrace, to expel it - and in full accordance with the desire of the people themselves! - this topic subconsciously still haunts us. Soviet propaganda offered the people a version that was directly opposite to the truth, but very convenient: an enemy many times superior to the enemy attacked a defenseless country, we were not prepared

'Felshtinsky Yu. "Reading the books "Icebreaker" and "M Day" by Viktor Suvorov. "Messenger". No. 26. 2007.

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you, one rifle was for two, and so on. These absurd theses have long been refuted by figures and facts (in 1941, it was the USSR that had absolute superiority over the Wehrmacht, not only in manpower, but also in technology). However, they are so ingrained in the Russian consciousness that they are repeated even by those who have seen with their own eyes hundreds of thousands of soldiers and commanders who voluntarily surrendered, and front roads littered with brand new abandoned equipment. This reluctance to tell oneself the truth about the war is still something of a common complex...

And the truth, which one does not want to admit so much, is this: a lot of Soviet people, intimidated and reduced to poverty by the Stalinist regime, who have lost their moral

and moral guidelines, in 1941 they did not want to fight and die for SUCH power. For the power that deprived a person of all rights and freedoms. This was the worst surprise the regime faced in 1941. I am sure that the defeat of the Red Army in 1941 happened precisely because most of the active army simply refused to fight. Let's put it this way: I didn't know how, and I don't want to.

body...

Strictly speaking, we must finally understand that from 1941 to 1945 we had not one, but two wars. Completely different wars. It was then already a shameful and heroic, Patriotic, by the efforts of propaganda were merged into one.

It's just that the fascist regime turned out to be even more cruel than the Soviet regime. Stalin got exactly the enemy with whom he could cope: even more inhuman, infinitely far from ideas about humanism and human rights. And therefore, the Patriotic War, which began around the turn of 1942-1943, was really won by the people, who, however, fought and died not for the mustachioed man and not for the world revolution, but for themselves, avenging their comrades who died in captivity and the family tortured by the Nazis. And not thanks to, but in spite of the regime, he reached Berlin in 1945.

1 Solonin M.: Ogonyok. 2006. No. 23.

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"Writer Daniil Granin, speaking on the occasion of Victory Day (in 2001), said," writes Mark Solonin, "that all objective conditions were in favor of the victory of Germany, which, it would seem, could not help but win, but Russia won! Because, they say, we fought for the Motherland and for high ideals. (These ideals are so virtual that I don't remember how Granin called them.)"

The position of Mark Solonin looks more convincing than that of the writer Daniil Granin.

Is Mark Solonin right? Having read his books, I fully share the author's judgments. I am confused only by the wording expressed by the author in three words: Mark Solonin claims in it that "the army did not fight" - that's the answer to the question: "What happened in 1941?" I think that this is not entirely true. Indeed, most of the army "did not fight", voluntarily surrendered. But some fought, tried to stop the invaders even for a day, even for a few hours or minutes. The published memoirs describe hundreds of examples of the courage of commanders and fighters who laid down their lives in the fields near Bialystok, Vitebsk, Minsk, Belaya Tserkov, Uman, Kiev, Novgorod, Leningrad, near Moscow. The struggle of the Brest Fortress is inscribed in golden letters in the history of the war. Many of the dying heroes, I am sure, said this: "Gowa-

Rishch Stalin, we believed you so much!"

The army, in which I came to the front after the military school, was different, formed after June 22, 1941.

"The first thing to be taught to a recruit is that his chief duty is to obey his superiors without consulting his own conscience."

William Channing,
from the biography of Napoleon 1

Chapter Three

HOW NOT TO FIGHT: "AT ANY COST"

Soldier's conversation

On the eve of the Victory Day, on May 6, 1999, the Rzhevskiy Vesti newspaper published an essay by N. Ladygin and N. Smirnov called "This is how you should fight." I quote it with a slight abbreviation:

"For ten days, from July 30 to August 8, the 220th Rifle Division under the command of Colonel S.G. Poplavsky, with a separate rifle brigade and a tank brigade transferred to it, unsuccessfully stormed the heavily fortified enemy strongholds - Belkovo, Svinino and Kharino .

When attacking these villages, it was necessary to overcome low, bushy terrain, which, after heavy rains, turned into an impenetrable quagmire. In daily repeated attacks, our units suffered huge losses. The fighting took on a protracted character. Tanks and small rifle units, breaking through the first trench of the enemy, broke into Belkovo, but did not achieve success.

On August 5, a group of fighters of the 376th regiment from the battalion of Captain F.I. Taranets, led by political instructor S.I. Vyzhimoy, burst into the outskirts of Belkovo with a swift throw and destroyed 6 enemy bunkers. The Nazis cut off

On August 9, the attack was personally led by the division commander, Colonel Stanislav Gilyarovich Poplavsky. Army General S.G. Poplavsky recalled this episode in his memoirs as follows: "I was called to the telephone by the commander of the troops of the front, I.S. Konev, who was at the command post of the 30th Army.

- Why don't you use the tank brigade attached to you? - he asked.

"Almost all the tanks got stuck in the swamps," I replied.

- So pull them out yourself and lead the attack, and behind them pull up the infantry.

Only 4 vehicles were prepared for a second attack. Fulfilling the order of the commander in the literal sense, I got into the lead tank, ordering the commander of the 673rd rifle regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Maksimov, to follow us and capture Belkovo with a throw. Two other regiments were supposed to go on the offensive.

The tanks were not able to maneuver in marshy terrain, but the lead tank with Poplavsky, skillfully led by tank commander I. Vorontsov, reached the northwestern outskirts of Belkovo. The remaining three tanks were still moving along the neutral zone.

At that time, the Germans cut off our infantry from the tanks with a dense curtain of artillery and mortar fire, and Poplavsky ordered the tank crews to fire from a place on the radio. But when turning around, Vorontsov's tank fell with one caterpillar into a deep trench. The car firmly settled on the bottom of the ground. Poplavsky radioed Maksimov about this, but he was wounded and out of action. Small groups of Nazis began to approach the tank. Opening the hatch, the tankers threw grenades at the enemy.

Perhaps the enemy decided to capture the crew alive. The commander of a tank company, who was in this tank, voluntarily volunteered to get to his own people, but died on the way. Three members of the crew and division commander Poplavsky fought off the advancing Nazis before dark. Everything already

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were injured. Just in case, they exchanged addresses and agreed that the one who survived would write to the relatives of the victims.

In the afternoon, the commander of the 653rd Infantry Regiment, I.A. Kurchin, ordered his chief of staff, G.V. Skovorodkin, to organize a strike group and personally lead the liberation of the tank crew. Skovorodkin's group managed to cut off the enemy from the tank with fire and keep him at a distance during the day.

At nightfall, the battalion of the 673rd Infantry Regiment under the command of Major N.I. Glukhov approached the tank and, together with Skovorodkin's group, led the crew with the division commander to the division's location. Glukhov conveyed to Plavsky the order of the front commander Konev to immediately report himself from the observation post of the neighboring brigade. Half an hour later, Poplavsky was already at the brigade's OP and began to report, after a few phrases the connection was interrupted. Then the chief of staff of the 30th Army, General G.I. Khetagurov, calming Poplavsky, said: "Take control of the division into your own hands."

On August 12, at 11 o'clock in the afternoon, the 653rd and 673rd regiments broke into Belkovo. From August 12 to August 21, the division reached Rzhev in fierce battles, captured the village of Opoki, a field airfield, where 15 serviceable enemy aircraft were captured! The losses of our units were great. So, in the second half of August, about 300 fighters remained in the 653rd rifle regiment, and the commander of the 653rd regiment, I.A. Kurchin, also died in the battle for the airfield. In the divisional newspaper "For the Motherland!" In the 1930s, a note was printed "To beat the enemy like a tankman Vorontsov!", which told how, in a battle for one heavily fortified enemy point, tankman Ivan Vorontsov broke into a village on a powerful tank and destroyed the Nazis. But here the car with its right caterpillar got stuck in a German trench. The enemy triumphed! But the tanker Vorontsov, in an unequal battle, fired back for 12 hours, exterminated 18 Nazis,

| All hijacked aircraft were destroyed. — Approx. auth..

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destroyed 3 dugouts, shot at point-blank range three Germans who were trying to blow up the tank.

After reading the essay, I remembered a tiny episode in the convalescent battalion, where I stayed for more than a month after being wounded in 1942 near Rzhev. Looking through the army newspaper, I read an article entitled "How to fight!". In the evening, during a smoke break, they started the traditional conversation "for life". It turned out that other soldiers did not ignore the article. It is curious that this newspaper came to us from another army: it was brought by the wounded - from the 220th Infantry Division. I ended up in the medical battalion, and then in the battalion of convalescents from the 215th rifle division.

What was the conversation about?

The first soldier: "The hacks have marked the article painfully wrong."

Second soldier: "And you, Ivan, how would you describe it?"

The first soldier: "If it's true, then I would designate it like this: "Hook - no need to fight!"

Third soldier: "Look, inventor

It seems that the conversation ended at the last exclamation. Yes, to be honest, everyone was more interested in the news of tomorrow's arrival of doctors from the medical battalion in order to "identify the appearance" of those fit to be sent to the front line.

Before going to sleep then I thought: "Is the first soldier right? What common sense prompted the divisional commander to climb into the tank? Did he really believe that the car would make it through the impassable mud to Belkovo? Did he really assume that only one of his courageous deeds, not devoid of serious risk, would inspire the fighters and they would show bold and decisive actions?

I quickly forgot my unfinished reasoning about that event. The Rzhev newspaper reminded of him almost 60 years later. Having gone through many battles, having sipped their bitter cup, I decided to return to him and mentally supported the first soldier from that old conversation.

Reading the general's memoirs, books by local Rzhev authors, acquaintance with the materials of the Tver United State and Rzhev Museums of Local Lore

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allow us to present a picture of the famous July-August Gustov offensive in 1942, the so-called Rzhev-Sychevsk operation. In the official historiography of Russia, up to the present day, there are no serious assessments of it. Military historians try not to touch upon this unpleasant fact in the history of the Great Patriotic War.

The commanders who led that operation (I.S. Konev, G.K. Zhukov), in their memoirs about it, are limited to meager lines. However, how many cases are known when the generals themselves would talk about their defeats? In the historical essay on the "Combat Route of the 31st Army", in which the 220th Division fought, there are only panegyrics. Not to mention the academic work "History of the Second World War 1939 - 1945". On the pages of the twelve-volume edition, one can read about the victories of the Red Army, but the authors probably decided to tell about its defeats, let the descendants tell.

The agonizing question I tried to find an answer to was to find out: were there any attempts to change the timing? It is known that suddenly raging endless rains in a short time turned the entire war zone into an impenetrable quagmire. It is clear that only Konev and Zhukov could obtain permission from the Stavka to change the time of the operation. They didn't. True, the Western Front went on the offensive a few days later than Kalinin-

sky, but this does not change the essence of the issue.

Some Western military historians, describing the battles on the Eastern Front, referring to the battles on the Rzhev-Vyazemsk bridgehead, are not able to understand why the Russian commanders acted so unreasonably - they did not wait for more favorable weather conditions in the area of the upcoming battles. Indeed, by doing so, they practically did not send the advancing troops to support aviation and tank forces, and also partially artillery. But these historians do not take into account two fundamentally important circumstances: the Soviet totalitarian system, from which

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there were the Red Army and the character of the Russian soldier who had grown accustomed to reckless obedience. As for domestic military historians and generals who fought near Rzhev, in their memoirs they, as a rule, turned out to be painfully "forgetful" or simply "liars".

And how to understand Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov, who in November-December 1942 launched an attack on Rzhev (Operation Mars) in even more unsuitable conditions (snow, blizzard, frost, icy roads)?

A WORD ABOUT THE RUSSIAN SOLDIER

And so, the fateful decision was made... Five armies, aviation, tank brigades, artillery regiments were set in motion. Let's think about this ... Starting the offensive, what did the new "Alexandra Nevsky", "Suvorov", "Kutuzov" hope for?

Why did I call our generals like that? It is known that in modern Russia, as yesterday, the memory of the war of 1812 is widely cultivated. It is no coincidence that the famous Cathedral of Christ the Savior, built at the expense of the people in due time in honor of Russia's victory over Napoleon, has actually been rebuilt anew in Moscow. In 2007, preparations were made in Moscow for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the Patriotic War of 1812. There is another reason why we recalled the great Russian generals. Many generals who fought near Rzhev were awarded orders for military art that bear their names.

It is known that Stalin introduced these orders during the war years. Was there enough reason to award them to the current generals?

What were the commanders hoping for when starting the operation?

To God? In only one case: if he stops the ugliness in his subordinate Nature. According to this

tea, and a glass of vodka. But the miracle did not happen! Full of vanity, immense pride and sure

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after the defeat of the Germans near Moscow, they seriously overestimated their own ability to attack and underestimated the enemy's ability to defend to go.

For example, I am surprised by this fact. When the commander of the Western Front, G.K. Zhukov, wrote "We will beat Model," writes G.K. Zhukov in his memoirs. It's turned around! Walter Model, leading the defense at the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead, showed high military leadership qualities. It is no coincidence that Hitler called him the "Lion of Defense".

Did the Soviet commanders really think that aircraft without radio communications and the latest navigational instruments, in bad weather and in the presence of strong German aviation and their anti-aircraft units, would conquer the sky over the battlefield, which means they would be able to protect the attackers? That did not happen!

Maybe the tanks will be able to overcome the roadless space from the starting positions to the German defense and destroy the enemy firing points, help to land the infantry, cover it with their strong armor? That did not happen!

In 1942, no matter how the Soviet press boasted, praising the quality of domestic weapons for propaganda purposes, this was far from the truth. We soldiers knew the truth, but knowing that a tribunal threatened to praise German technology, we remained silent. Our famous PPSH, with a disk magazine that was very inconvenient for equipment, was inferior in all respects to the German "Schmeisser"; the bulky, long-bayoneted 20th-century Mosin-designed rifle was inferior to the German carbine. The outdated, water-cooled machine gun "Maxim" gave the machine gunners a lot of worries, especially in the summer, and with a textile tape - in bad weather. The Degtyarev light machine gun was remembered by the former machine gunners only

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exorbitant weight for this type of weapon. When the compact rapid-fire MG-42 appeared in the arsenal of the German infantry, our attacking battalions had little chance of surviving under its (up to 1000 rounds per minute) fire. With such a machine gun with a well-placed

positions in a matter of minutes it was possible to destroy an entire battalion.

As always, the army commanders and commissars were firmly convinced of the high sense of duty and patriotism of commanders and privates. Did it happen?

The main hope, which the authorities did not advertise, was on the Russian soldier, on his endurance, the ability to withstand any physical and psychological stress. This happened, but the effect was not

high.

For days without sleep, without decent food, without a well-established life, for weeks unwashed, lice-ridden, constantly in the cold or frost, in the rain or snow, on your own feet - from Moscow to Berlin - in endless marches and transitions, sometimes up to 40 - 50 kilometers a day or night, deprived of female affection for years, badly dressed, experiencing constant violence against himself by commanders and commissars, eternal fear of the special forces - tell me, a soldier of which army could withstand all this?

The soldier near Belkovo did not deceive his superiors, but resignedly walked knee-deep in water, fell dead on the wet cold ground, and no one humanly buried him either then or later.

The soldier, going on the attack, actually remained one on one with the enemy, he knew that neither God, nor commanders, nor his planes, tanks and artillery would help him.

Trying to understand and comprehend this abnormal life phenomenon, which can be safely compared with the famous painting by the artist Karl Bryullov "The Death of Pompeii", I thought about the following. And there, in the raging ocean of lava, and here, on the battlefield, the souls of people were full of despair and complete doom. I would call the fights under Belkov's madness, bordering on crime. Doo

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May that in the days of the battles for Rzhev, Soviet generals, first of all, deceived themselves and others. It doesn't take much skill to do this.

In all democratic countries, the law establishes deadlines after which the government is obliged to declassify state secrets. In Russia, the limitation period for information about the Great Patriotic War has long expired, but many archival materials are not available to this day. One of the reasons for this is the "blank spots" in the history of the Patriotic War. Until now, they either have not been fully disclosed, or we know little about them.

FIGHTS FOR BELKOVO

I'll tell you about one of them, which became known quite recently: about the battles of the 220th division for three villages - Belkovo, Svinino, Kharino - located six to seven kilometers north of Rzhev. They formed one of the enemy's fortified points on the way to the city.

The division was prepared for the fight against the Germans in the best possible way. Numbered 14 thousand commanders and fighters. It had at its disposal: a tank brigade (approximately 50 tanks), a separate artillery regiment, a special cadet brigade, and several divisions of rocket launchers. Force! It exceeded the defending side: in men - 8-9 times, in tanks - 50, batteries - 4-6 times. The division had rich combat experience. She went through the fiery 41st year, defending Vitebsk and Sychevka, driving the enemy from Moscow to the west.

The division was commanded by Colonel Stanislav Gilyarovich Poplavsky, a career commander of the Red Army. In the 41st - major, regiment commander. He distinguished himself in the January battles in the 42nd west of Rzhev - in the famous Monchalovsky Forests. The question consisted in one thing - skillfully or ineptly dispose of on the battlefield "Alexandra Nevsky", "Suvorov" and "Kutuzov" human and combat superiority over the Germans, will they be able to show military skill?

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On the first day of the offensive, already at dawn, it began to rain, then turned into a downpour. I wonder where the forecasters were? Quickly, the whole land turned into a black muddy mess and practically became impassable. Water in rivers, lakes, streams overflowed their banks and overflowed, flooding everything around. True, it should be noted that our attack aircraft managed to make one sortie and tried to iron the German trenches.

Separate memoirs of veterans, participants in the battles for Belkovo, have been preserved. They reveal the general picture of the battle "without umbrellas" overhead. Here is what they say: the attempts of sappers to build the so-called "roads-lezhnevka" were unsuccessful. Under the weight of tanks and guns, they went deep into the muddy ground. The whole area was flooded with water. People, guns, horses got stuck in the mud. I had to manually pull the horses and cannons out of the swamp with ropes. The infantry was actually left without the support of tanks and artillery.

This is how it works in war: a soldier cannot escape from bad weather. Near Belkovo, almost on all days of the fighting, the soldiers lived and fought in the rain, "dried" under it, "slept" under it, in the morning, if possible, made small fires and warmed up a little near them. Throughout the area where the battle went on day and night, no buildings were preserved where it was possible to hide at least for a while from sputum.

Let's try to briefly convey the chronicle of hostilities.

The first day is July 30th.

Two regiments are advancing. There is no success. The losses of the attackers are great. The battlefield was covered with the first corpses.

The second day is July 31st.

No matter how much the soldiers cursed the sky for rainy weather, or asked to change "anger to mercy" - it remained indifferent to their requests. The divisional commander brought into battle all three rifle regiments. Exhausted, trying to cope with the mud, the gunners tried to keep up with the infantry with 76- and 45-mm guns, putting them on direct fire. Despite the hurricane fire—artillery, mortar, machine-gun fire—soldiers burst into

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the eastern part of Belkovo, seize the extreme huts and clear them of German machine gunners. But strong fire from not destroyed bunkers in the depths of the village forces them to retreat. During the second day of fighting, the division lost 340 men killed and 714 wounded.

Third day - | August.

5:00 am - Three regiments (653rd, 376th and 673rd) attack Belko vo. A strong spectacle - nine battalions, twenty-seven companies ... To no avail ...

5:50 am - The Germans open heavy artillery fire and counterattack on the positions of the 653rd regiment. Two companies of infantry and a cavalry squadron. The counterattack is repulsed, and the soldiers of the 653rd occupy the southeastern outskirts of the village. (Regiment commander - Lieutenant Colonel I.A. Kurchin.)

7:00 am - The 376th regiment attacks the northwestern, and the 673rd northern outskirts of Belkovo. Both attacks are repulsed by opponents- <)

11:30 am - German infantry battalion under cover of artillery fire again tries to break through the positions of the 653rd regiment, but, having not achieved the goal, retreats.

03:00 in the afternoon - after a 15-minute artillery raid on enemy positions (there was not enough ranks for a longer time), the 376th and 673rd regiments again go forward, but, not reaching a hundred meters northwest - to Belkovo, lie down. It is not possible to overcome enemy fire. There are more corpses on the battlefield. The lines of the wounded are getting longer and longer, wandering along the washed-out roads to the medical battalion. On the night of August 2, reinforcements come to the division - 486 privates. Half of them are poorly trained recruits.

The fourth day is August 3rd. At dawn, after a little artillery preparation and a strong volley of two divisional rocket launchers, fired for some reason at Svinino, a new furious throw of soldiers' chains at Belkovo, followed by more ...

By two o'clock in the afternoon ordered to withdraw. A powerful strike of jet mortars is expected. At 3:20 a volley of four divisions was fired at Belkovo. Wasted. The fire did not work on the northern, as it should, but on the eastern part of the de

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jealous. Lots of shortcomings. Immediately after a truly thunderous volley of Katyushas, the divisional commander, without fully evaluating its results, again throws all three regiments into battle, and this time -
eight tanks.

He crossed a deep stream in front of the village, only one of the T-34s, Lieutenant Grigory Pavlovich Eshtokin, broke into Belkovo. The divisional newspaper wrote about this feat. The rest got stuck in the swamp mud and became in fact targets for the German artillery.

6:00 pm - despite strong resistance, the soldiers reach the northern outskirts of Belkovo and break into Svinino. It seems that just about the enemy, unable to withstand the pressure of the attackers, will falter and retreat. The commander is sure of success. But in these decisive moments, Junkers appear in the sky from the side of Rzhev. Bomb strikes and machine-gun bursts, which fell from the air on the infantry, forced them to retreat, to disperse across the field.

"Where have our hawks gone?" - the soldiers swear. They crawl into cracks with water, cuddle up to the dirty ground, hugging their helmets with both hands. Tears fill the eyes from bitterness. Colossal fountains of reddish-brown earth scatter across the field torn into parts of the body, flying around upwards heads, arms, legs. When will the bombing end? Behind the first, a new wave of German aircraft appears. All repeats.

Colonel Poplavsky called the commander and asked him: "Why is our aviation not working?" He answered him in his heart: "There is a front commander at my observation post, so you ask him" In the commander's voice, the division commander felt some kind of cunning laugh. "Okay," the division commander decided, "we'll do without an airplane

tov. It didn't work out.

At night, summed up the fighting for four days. The division lost an estimated 817 men killed and 3,083 wounded. Despite the replenishment, only 100-150 people remained in the regiments.

If the supply of faith runs out, what happens? Knowing the well-known order No. 227 and what awaits a soldier for unauthorized

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leaving the battlefield, however, many soldiers, under every pretext, sought to leave it, referring to unthinkable fatigue, unbearable nerves and fear, terrible weather, bloody diarrhea, general malaise, all kinds of ailments. The soldiers also looked for other ways to hide from death: they helped the wounded, signalmen, and simply hid - where and as best they could.

In the 220th division, one and a half to two kilometers from the front line, there was a barrage detachment with machine guns - 100 people. In addition, groups of machine gunners were formed in all regiments to help the detachment.

In the first days of the speech, you were looking for those who left the front line. They tried to bring them back into line by force of arms. Later, they were judged, sent to penal companies, and shot.

It is known, according to far from complete data, from July 31 to August 8, that is, in the first ten days of fighting, 547 people abandoned the front line (and some left their weapons). 386 of them are soldiers of the 220th division. A shameful fact for the honor of the army! The authorities tried to hide it. If we spread these figures on the scale of the front, it is not difficult to determine that thousands fled.

Again attacks, attacks... With short breaks they follow one after another. And so - until August 12 - fourteen days.

For a long time the battlefield - from the starting positions to Belkovo (five hundred to six hundred meters) - was called the "Valley of Death".

Dirty, overgrown, unwashed, half-starved, with frayed nerves, with a completely worn-out psyche, without faith in "God and the devil", people have turned into half-wild creatures. Where did simple speech, sincere good human feelings go? "Give me at least a night, at least an hour to relax," the soldiers asked the commanders. Did not work.

I would like to ask a soldier who miraculously survived near Belkovo what was preserved in his soul, only after one day - August 3

1 In connection with the change in the general situation at the front since 1943, there was no need for the existence of barrage detachments. In the autumn of 1944 they were disbanded. (Author's note).

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a hundred, when fifteen "Junkers" attacked the division twenty times in one day. The next day, as a "gift" to the infantry (the only way the soldiers regarded it), in

our planes appeared in the sky for fifteen minutes: from 9.30 am to 9.45 am. At the same time, they bombed "their own". K. fortunately killed one horse.

How often, both then and later, in the most cruel situations in the war, youth rescued us, commanders and soldiers: to continue to live, to fight, to suppress fear in ourselves, not to lose faith in success! In these battles, as I found out later, young guys turned into old men, often turned gray, lost vigor, self-confidence, strength of mind, and sometimes even mind.

Endless bloody attacks without hope of success, which each time turned into an illusion, turned in a short time both old and young into mechanical executors of someone else's will, made them true slaves of war. Was it all out of fear? No. They forgot about him, he was replaced by a more complete indifference to himself, to life, to his comrades.

In the most desperate moments of the battle near Belkovo, soldiers rarely cried. Cry - why? Compassion has long been forgotten. At the same time, a feeling of powerlessness constantly grew in people, it took root deeper and deeper in the soul. Few hoped to get out alive from the massacre near Belkovo.

At night, a huge glow brightly illuminated the "valley of death" - villages were burning around. Mountains of corpses - ours and the Germans. It has long been known that civilized savagery is the worst of all forms of savagery. However, what happened near Belkovo, Svinino, Kharino, by no means is defined by the word "savagery". This is a senseless murder, without any responsibility for human destinies, without shame and the concept of guilt.

For every day in those infernal fortnights, according to headquarters operational reports and according to reports from political agencies, the division lost 100-150 people killed and 600-700 wounded. I think the numbers are underestimated.

How did they differ from the dry staff reports of politdonese

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niya? Firstly, with big lies and additions decorated like Easter eggs: "about mass heroism", "about individual feats", primarily of communists and Komsomol members, about a stream of statements "from fighters" with a request to accept them into the ranks of the Communist parties. For example, the following information was cited: in the midst of the fiercest fighting between August 3 and 10, more than 200 applications were filed on the front line. Maybe at first it happened, and then - dismiss ...

Probably, at that time, near Belkovo, a funny story appeared among the Red Army men about a Ukrainian soldier who, before the battle, wrote an application for joining the party:

"If you want to beat me, I ask you to respect me as a communist, but if you don't, THAT IS NOT ..."

One of the typical examples of political reports is a fake story about the tank hero I. Vorontsov, which is very far from reality. Later, I often saw how political workers compiled political reports. How many lies were present in them! Tell me, what kind of "stream" of statements can one write about when a soldier is driven and driven against German machine guns? In those days and nights, he simply could not think about something, understand something, feel something, except for his own impotence and, obviously, just pity for himself. It was in this, and not in political reports, that the truth consisted.

Neither the staff officers nor the political agencies during the entire war, both near Rzhev and near Berlin, never once said, did not shout at the top of their voices about the most important thing: "An offensive without first suppressing all the main fire weapons of the enemy is unacceptable!" Meanwhile, unfortunately, in none of the operations of the Red Army of the Kalinin and Western Fronts (1, 1942, PL, 1943) on the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead was this requirement implemented. Hence the colossal losses and defeats. At the same time, one of the explanations for the successful German defense. How we all - both generals and soldiers - lacked the ability to fight then!

Let us pay attention to the memoirs of marshals, generals,

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commanders of all ranks, published in the 60-70s - hundreds of books. In any of them, the author complains that it was not possible to suppress all enemy fire weapons.

Despite all the difficulties that I have described, on August 12, late in the evening, two regiments of the 220th division drove the Germans out of Belkovo, Svinino and Kharin. This was done after the 2nd Guards Rifle Division under the command of Major General P.G. Chanchibadze was brought into battle to defeat the enemy stronghold. (This division was the only one withdrawn from Rzhev in the summer of 1942 and sent to Stalingrad)'.

After each battle, regiments, battalions, and companies thinned out more and more. When the results were calculated, this is what happened: 40 people remained in the 376th regiment, 48 in the 653rd, and 64 in the 673rd. Total: 152 soldiers and commanders in three rifle regiments of the division. By the beginning of the offensive, there were almost 8,000 people in them.

Perhaps, near Belkovo, a terrible expression was born - "a one-time soldier." Where did it come from, who invented it? Perhaps, by analogy, "a disposable syringe" or a "disposable suit" is for the dead? The point is not in the search for an analogy, but in the fact that

dat, who got to the front line near Rzhev, immediately felt like a "dead man".

Perhaps what I have told the reader will seem like a delusional fantasy. In support of the above facts, I will cite a short extract from the Information Bulletin of German Intelligence (January 1942). Here is what it says: "Russian attacks, as a rule, take place once and for all according to this scheme - in large masses of people, several times without any changes. The advancing infantry leaves their positions in compact groups and rushes to the attack with a cry of "Hurrah!" from a great distance.

1 Soshnev V.G. With faith in victory. M.: Military Publishing House, 1982. S. 94-96. 2 All data, including information about the escapes of deserters, about the battle for Belkovo, Kharino and Svinino, are based on the materials of Rzhevsky

Museum of Local Lore, as well as on the book of Ladygin I.Z. and Smirnova N.I. At the Rzhev border. Rzhev, 1992, pp. 63-74.

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Officers and commissars follow behind and shoot at those who retreat ... Due to superior numbers, this method has made it possible to achieve 'many major successes'. A German officer, in a letter to his relatives, spoke about the attacks of the Red Army in August near Kiev: "From a distance of 600 meters we opened fire, and entire squads in the first wave of attackers fell to the ground ... Those who survived alone stupidly walked forward. It was terrifying, unbelievable, inhuman. None of our soldiers would move forward. The second wave also suffered losses, but closed ranks over the corpses of their comrades who fell in the first wave. Then, as if on cue, the chains of people began to run. As they approached, a discordant rolling "Hurrah ah!" was heard ... The first three waves were destroyed by our fire ... The onslaught of the fourth wave was slower: people made their way along the carpet of corpses ... I will not hide, they frightened us ... If the Soviets can afford to spend so many people trying to eliminate even the insignificant results of our offensive, then how often and with what number of people will they attack if the object is really very important?

Songwriters during the war years came up with highly patriotic texts, and composers wrote good music for them. The soldiers willingly sang these songs, although they knew that many of them were far from the harsh reality of the front. For example, "The bullet is afraid of the brave, the bayonet does not take the brave" or "Any bombing is not terrible for us, it's too early for us to die - we still have things to do at home," etc. and so on. War is harsh and it doesn't always happen like the song says.

NYAH.

The ancient sages said: "A blind man is not the one who does not see

dit, but the one who does not want to see. How many among the commanders and commissars during the war years I met zealous servicemen who had lost the precious quality of a person - "to see", and therefore to empathize. When we, officers, talked about this topic, almost everyone, as a rule, came to the same conclusions: "Who would allow in a front-line situation to disobey, not to carry out an order?" It turns out - gloomy

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hopelessness? Not certainly in that way. During the war years, history has preserved many facts and names of commanders and commissars when they refused to drive soldiers like "cannon fodder" against German machine guns, to move tanks under bombs or enemy cannons. Alas, in the battles for Rzhev, I did not hear about such facts.

OPINION ABOUT COMMANDERS

How to evaluate the behavior of the division commander of the 220th near Belkovo? Is he really a soulless servant, or, perhaps, he should not have taken the instructions of the front commander so "literally"? Didn't Poplavsky understand that both the leading tank and the vehicles following it would get stuck? Perhaps the colonel was at a loss, did not find a better solution, or, even worse, chickened out in front of his superiors? How many divisional commanders laid down people and equipment, but Belkovo was not taken. He knew that for these and, perhaps, even greater losses, he would not be asked. "We won't stand up for the price - remember the words of a popular song? But for failure to comply with the order "at any cost" you will have to hold a strict answer.

Stanislav Gilyarovich understood: the greatest courage and the highest impulse, no matter how you think, will never replace combat training and skillful combat. Therefore, he hardly hoped that his fearless, and in my opinion, reckless, act would lead to success, because in fact, for some time, control of the division turned out to be lost. In his act, obviously, two Principles were combined: the desire to fulfill the order of the front commander at any cost and at the same time, as it seemed to him, in his behavior he saw something important, integral, heroic. Is not it?

A few words about the front commander. When the colonel general asks the divisional commander: "Why don't you use the tank brigade attached to you?" — it sounds, excuse me, naive. It's like asking a first-grader KU; for example: "What is the place in the Russian alphabet

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the letter a"?" What is the demand: "Pull out the tanks!"

Pure hypocrisy! How? Tractors, which are not, hands - under enemy fire? Ivan Stepanovich Konev knew the real situation on the battlefield as well as the soldiers. Meanwhile, his demand threatened to destroy the entire tank brigade. And so it happened. We know that the lead tank, in which the divisional commander, controlled by the best tanker, was stuck, he was forced to urgently ask to be rescued!

How did Konev evaluate the "feat" of the divisional commander? It is possible that he thought about the division commander of the 220th: "Fool. Understood my words literally, could not find another solution. If you're scared, that's good. "For the beaten one, they give two unbeaten ones" - this is how he was taught back in the First World War. The bad thing is that, having got into the tank, the colonel lost control of the division.

Why did Konev demand the impossible from the division commander? Obviously, Ivan Stepanovich wanted to present the victory report to the Supreme Commander as soon as possible, but he could not. And he knew: the Headquarters would not ask him for the loss of people and equipment, but you would have to answer for the failure of the offensive, the failure to comply with its Directive ...

Let's look briefly at the 35th Tank Brigade. During the first ten days of fighting, the brigade lost sixteen tanks. English tanks "Matilda" - do not count. Understanding the difficulty of using tanks off-road, the brigade commander, Lieutenant Colonel Burlyga, reported his own opinion to the divisional commander. He said this: "A tank is not a beast. You can't force a car to move through swampy terrain by goading. It seemed that the divisional commander agreed with a reasonable argument, but the next day everything suddenly changed. Stanislav Gilyarovich demanded from the brigade commander the best tank with the most experienced driver. Following the leading machine, where he himself will take a place, he ordered three more to be put into "business".

Approximately seven or eight months after the battles near Belkovo, I happened to meet with Lieutenant Colonel Skovorodkin, at that time he was already in command of the 653rd regiment. I reminded him of Belkov's epic, in particular

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episode with the rescue of the division commander. A softer and more balanced person cannot be found. He sighed heavily and answered: "I don't remember everything exactly, but we lost a lot of guys. The Germans, firing flares all night, surrounded us with mortar fire from all sides. The battle went on for twelve hours. Lucky for Stanislav Gilyarovich. He escaped with a slight wound, but gained fame, and soon the general's epaulettes.

The Germans, like crippled animals, licking their wounds, partially burying the dead, taking the wounded, left the villages and moved to a new line of defense. What then was the enemy? According to the prisoners,

The stronghold was defended by the 481st Infantry Regiment of the 256th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Don Gaer. To help the regiment, a reserve rifle battalion was transferred near Belkovo, mostly from recruits. For the first time he was introduced into a heavy battle on July 30. The German defense consisted of approximately 1200 soldiers and officers armed with mortars, machine guns and machine guns. They were supported by aviation and artillery.

... And suddenly - silence. She suddenly fell on people. It is difficult to get used to it, as if no one could imagine that it could ever come. How to UNDERSTAND THAT YOU SURVIVED, REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE A HUMAN! When this finally happened, I wanted to get rid of the lice, take a bath, smell the soap, put on clean linen, get a haircut, get new boots, trousers, and a laundry. The old trousers and tunics were so worn out and smelled bad that it was no longer possible to wear them. Finally, throw away dirty, smelly, sticky footcloths. "Damn it, is that even possible?" the soldiers asked.

The authorities did everything possible to satisfy the soldiers' desires. How many of them are left - heroes? Even in the last battle, on August 12, 24 soldiers died and 97 were wounded. The survivors - and some posthumously - were awarded. On this occasion, decent words were said, yes, Lee did not sleep in the rain, but in tents, washed, fed

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Li, dressed in everything new and sent for re-formation. And yet, no matter what difficulties life presents, it is beautiful!

In conclusion, I considered it expedient to place the letter of Nikolai Grigoryevich Volkov, a former resident of Rzhev, in the newspaper Rzhev Vesti. In its content, direction and pathos, it complements my judgments about how not to fight! Judge for yourself! The letter is reproduced with slight abbreviations:

"On Victory Day (May 6, 1999), the editorial office of the newspaper Rzhevskiy Vesti received a letter from the Odessa region from a former Rzhevite, a native of the village of Muravyevo Nikolay Grigoryevich Volkov, in which he addresses the authors of the book "At the Rzhev Frontier" I.3 .Ladygin and N.I. Smir new:

Dear Igor Zinovievich and Nikolai Ivanovich, hello! Last summer I was on vacation with my brother in the village of Muravyevo, near Rzhev. He gave me a book written by you about the city of Rzhev, dear to my heart, about the Rzhev battle. Thank you for your wonderful book, for the memory of those who gave their lives for our city, for our land, for all of us.

At that time I was 10 years old, and I remember much of what happened in the village from the moment it was occupied by the Germans, perhaps with a certain amount of childish fantasy. I have not lived in my homeland since 1943, as I ended up in an orphanage.

You read books about the Great Patriotic War, get acquainted with its documents that were hidden from us for a long time, and you think: when will we learn to love and take care of our soldier? Take care of him the way the great commanders Suvorov and Kutuzov did. Some military historians cite the ratio of the dead in many battles as 10:1, not in our favor. What can more eloquently confirm that the soldier was driven to an unjustified and certain death. And then they wrote articles about his exploits and heroism. How many lies and untruths have been written about this

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water, how much window dressing is arranged. And the writer Astafiev is right when he said that we covered our enemies with our blood, covered our enemies with our corpses, because we did not know how to fight, we fought in numbers, not sparing the soldier. And you are absolutely right when you write that near Rzhev there were often not battles, but senseless beatings, the destruction of our fighters, and give vivid examples. Why Lelyushenko, commander of the 30th Army, devoted 23 lines to the battles near Rzhev is not difficult to answer. He himself is to blame for many things, but he was afraid for his fate, he was afraid to confess, like many other military commanders. From the conversations of the veterans who fought under him, I repeatedly heard that he was rude and indifferent to the fate of the soldier.

Reading the article "Through the Fiery Corridor" in your book "At the Rzhev Frontier", you ask the question, what about S.G. He did not mention this in his meager reminiscences, as if nothing had happened. It seems that these vain sacrifices are on his conscience, which is why he does not write about it?

The operation was clearly not prepared. You write that the offensive of the army units was carried out most often without the support of tanks, aircraft, artillery in incredibly difficult conditions: deep snow, frost up to 30 degrees, no opportunity to warm up and dry uniforms. The supply of ammunition, food and medicine from warehouses located tens of kilometers to the north did not meet the needs of the army, and so on. Fairly said. This was one of the reasons for the failure in an attempt to take Rzhev on January 17-20, 1942. How could the city, turned by the Germans into an impregnable fortress with a large number of troops and equipment, be liberated by hungry soldiers, exhausted in battles, armed with a rifle, crackers and red

Lelyushenkod. D. Moscow-Stalingrad-Berlin-Prague. Moscow:
Military Publishing House, 1985.

Prior to the 220th division, S. G. Poplavsky commanded the 185th division, which participated in the Rzhev-Sychevsk operation.

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banner? This is a clear crime! After all, for a whole year then we had to stand at the walls of the city and continue to litter the Rzhev land with the corpses of our soldiers. But how few such crimes against a simple soldier were committed by short-sighted, mediocre military leaders! After all, war is war, it will write everything off. The main thing in it is the result, and the winners are not judged.

I also want to tell about what happened near Tolstikov and in the field near him. The advancing units of the 185th Infantry Division occupied the village of Tolstikovo, which housed a German food warehouse with schnapps and a bakery. It can be said that the Germans surrendered it without a fight, with the expectation that the exhausted, hungry Russians would definitely take the opportunity to eat and drink, because the frost was 30 degrees. This calculation of the Germans worked clearly. The Germans called in a large tank assault force from Rzhev, which marched through our village all night. In the village of Muravyevo itself, near the houses, the backyards of which looked at the Moscow-Riga railway track, and behind it at the Khrebtovskoye field and Tolstikovo, mortars were installed, conducting intense fire on our advancing troops. Mortars with crews were camouflaged with a snow wall as high as a man. Two mortars stood near our house. After shooting, the Germans came to us to warm themselves and came out again to fire. Hot pea soup with pork, bread, and cocoa were brought to their combat positions. The Germans set up machine guns in the bushes along the railway track and mowed down our attacking fighters, and the tanks covered the entire field with fragmentation shells. The battle went on for almost a whole day. By evening it became quiet. German tanks, again through our village, returned to Rzhev.

The village German hospital was overflowing with the wounded, who were brought in the evening and at night from Tolstikovo. The next day, the Germans picked up their dead and buried them outside the village in their new cemetery. All of our wounded were finished off when we gathered our own. The Germans took off warm clothes from our dead soldiers: hats,

jackets, felt boots, mittens. The snow covered the bodies of the dead with a white shroud until April 1942.

In the spring, the Germans forced the inhabitants of Tolstikovo and Muraviev to bury the corpses. Funnels from air bombs and shells served as their graves. I went with my father (he died only in the autumn of 1942) to this field and saw a terrible picture of

results of that battle. The still not quite decomposed corpses of the warriors lay in various positions and for the most part completely naked; many without both legs. Most had fence stakes next to them instead of rifles. Due to my age, I didn't understand much of what I saw. It turns out that our compatriot marauders from our and nearby villages were stripped of their legs and stripped of their underwear. They came to this field, tore off corpses from under the snow, took off their linen, and those from whom the Germans did not take off their felt boots because they were frozen to their feet, cut off their legs with an ax along with felt boots, brought them home, steamed them in baths, legs were thrown away, and felt boots were worn or, together with the washed linen removed from the corpses, were exchanged for salt, potatoes, bread in distant villages.

For a long time I doubted the correctness of my conclusions on this matter. Adults who have not seen all this told me that this is just the fantasy of a 10-year-old child. And so I came to visit my older sister Maria, who lives in the Moscow region. SHE is 87 years old, she is cheerful and has a memory - God forbid everyone at this age. She lived in the village throughout the occupation with her son and her two little daughters. Later, two girls died of starvation. In a conversation with me about the war, the occupation, and about the events of those days in our area, she called my "fantasies" the purest truth. "The stakes were lying near the soldiers because at the time of the attack they were drunk," she said, "forgot where their rifles were, and you have to go on the attack." She also said why the soldiers were lying naked. "Once," she says to me, "with a friend we decided to go on a similar" thought ". We went outside the village and said to each other: "Listen, where are we going, who will we undress?"

And they turned back. Until now, she can't

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forgive this. Wiping the widow's bitter old tears, he says: "After all, my Petenka was lying dead somewhere in the same way, I can't imagine that someone would strip him naked." She still does not know about the fate of her husband Pyotr Ravnov, who allegedly disappeared without a trace.

Dear Igor Zinovievich and Nikolai Ivanovich, having probably read your book, many people write to you, and especially those who were somehow involved in those events. This book is not to be read and forgotten. It must be saturated with tears, despite the fact that a lot of time has passed since then.

With respect to you, a working pensioner, a 67-year-old locksmith of the Ilyichevsk Commercial Sea Port - Volkov Nikolai Grigorievich.

Goodbye".

Afterword

Two worlds, two systems. In the American army, as well as in the British, officers were obliged to take care of saving the lives of their subordinates, otherwise they would inevitably be removed from their posts and put on trial.

In the Red Army, the most terrible crime was the failure to comply with the obviously impracticable, sometimes criminal, order of a superior commander. A disobedient person is threatened with immediate execution or, which is almost the same thing, being sent to a penal battalion - his boss was more terrible than the enemy. That is why, according to Mellentin, Soviet "commanders of the junior and often middle level suffered from sluggishness and inability to make independent decisions. Because of the harsh disciplinary action, they were afraid to take responsibility. The pattern in the training of commanders of small units led to the fact that they learned not to go beyond regulations and instructions, they were deprived of initiative and independence, which is very important for a good commander. The herd instinct of the soldiers is so great that

the individual fighter always seeks to merge with the "crowd". In this instinct one can see the roots of both panic and the greatest heroism and self-sacrifice.

The rigidity of the operational and strategic thinking of the command staff of the Red Army was more than compensated for by senseless, murderous frontal attacks. Marshal Bagramyan beautifully formulated this: "We had to rely on the main thing - the inflexible strength of the spirit of our people, on the fact that there are no impossible tasks for them." Therefore, they say, clearly unrealistic tasks were assigned to the troops with amazing persistence.

In Western armies, soldiers and commanders would refuse to obey orders to attack minefields and would certainly get a trial and remove the commander. Soviet fighters, on the contrary, knew well that complaining about superiors was a disastrous thing. What does it mean to be an ordinary fighter in the army, where marshals beat generals in the face, generals hit colonels, and division commanders are shot without trial in front of the ranks. "Good man" Konev preferred to reason with his subordinates with a stick. Colonel General G.F. Baidukov, who commanded an air division as part of the Kalinin Front, recalls: "... they summoned me to the Military Council of the front. Arrived. Matvey Zakharov, chief of staff, future Marshal of the Soviet Union, comes out of the hut, wipes the blood from his nose: "He hit, you bastard!"

"Once upon a time, my grandmother had a gray goat,
Like this, like this - a gray goat, Grandmother loved
the goat very much.

Like this, like this, I loved it very much. Gray
wolves attacked the goat,

Like this, like this - gray wolves, Left
grandmother - horns and legs - Like this, like this:

Gray goat."

Children's song

Chapter Four

COMRADE STALIN'S FAVORITE ANIMAL IS A GOAT! PERSONAL FRONT SKETCHES

The appearance of the play "Front"

In his memoirs, Marshal I.S. Konev tells a curious story that happened to him. "One day in the summer of 1942," writes the marshal, "suddenly Stalin calls me at the front and asks:

— Can you come?

- Can.

— Come.

I was then on the Kalinin front. I took a plane and flew to Moscow. I'm going to see Stalin. He has Zhukov and, I can't remember, someone else from our brother. Stalin right off the bat asks me:

- Did you read Korneichuk's play "Front" in Pravda?

- I read it, Comrade Stalin.

- What is your opinion?

"Very bad, Comrade Stalin.

I feel that I do not fall into the tone of the mood, but I have already begun to speak - I continue to speak. I say that it is wrong, harmful to ridicule the front commander in this way. If a bad commander is in your power to remove him, but when

'
Konev I.S. Notes of the Front Commander. Moscow: Golos, 200 pp., 117 -
from K. Simonov's book "Through the Eyes of My Generation".

the commander of the front is defamed, ridiculed in a work published in Pravda, this no longer has a particular meaning, it is not about just one, it casts a shadow on everyone. Stalin angrily interrupted me:

- You don't understand anything. This is a political issue, a political necessity. In this play, there is a struggle with the obsolete, obsolete, with those who are pulling us back. It's a good play, it puts the right question.

I said that I thought there was a lot of untruth in the play. In particular, when Ognev, appointed instead of the commander of the front, himself gives him an order to remove him and to appoint him, then this, from the point of view of any military man, does not climb into any gates, this is not done. Then the phrase broke out in me that I am not defending Gorlov, I am rather one of the people who are meant by Ognev, but I don't like all this in the play. Here Stalin finally got on me:

- Well, yes, you are Ognev! You are not Ognev, you are arrogant. You already know too. You are presumptuous, you are arrogant. You are the military, you understand everything, you know everything, but we civilians do not understand. We understand better than you what is needed and what is not needed.

Ones several times returned to the fact that I was arrogant, and pushed me, ardently insisting on the correctness and usefulness of Korneichuk's play. Then he turned to Zhukov:

- And what is your opinion about Korneichuk's play?

Zhukov was more fortunate than me: it turned out that he had not yet read this play, so that the whole blow in this case fell on me.

However, and this is typical of Stalin, he then gave instructions: to all members of the military councils of the fronts to ask the commanders and all the top generals what they thought of Korneichuk's play. And it was done. In particular, Bulganin spoke with the commander of the artillery of the Western Front, General Kamera. He cut him off with all his frankness: "I don't know what I would have done with this writer who wrote this play. This is a mediocre play, I would have finished with HIM for such a play. Well, this, of course, according to Went to the report.

On my next visit to Moscow, Stalin asks

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me who is Kamera. It took a long time to convince him that he was a good, strong commander of the artillery of the front, with great merits in the past, and thus defend the Chamber. He managed to do this, but if everything had turned out a little differently, a review of Korneichuk's play could have cost him dearly.

There are three characters in the above story: the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, playwright Alexander Korneichuk and the commander of the Kalinin Front - I.S. Konev. Before evaluating the actions of our heroes, it is probably appropriate to talk about the events associated with the appearance of the play itself, about its content and the reaction to it of various circles of society.

The play "Front" appeared on the public horizon of the country in one of the most critical periods of the war. On June 28, 1942, the two-million-strong German army began a new summer campaign. The two Soviet fronts opposing it, unable to withstand the powerful onslaught, collapsed. The German command chose the time for the offensive well: on the eve of the Soviet troops suffered two major defeats - in the Crimea and near Kharkov.

Supreme again, as in 1941, miscalculated in determining the enemy's choice of the strategic direction of the offensive. Stalin was firmly convinced that Hitler would take the offensive on the Central Front and try to capture Moscow. Therefore, on his instructions, the Headquarters concentrated the main reserves of the Red Army on this sector of the front.

Being at that time near Rzhev, we, the soldiers, acutely experienced the fall of the Crimea, the unthinkable cruel assault on Sevastopol, the Kharkov catastrophe and the swift throw of the fascist tank armies across the Don steppes to Stalingrad. Just think - in just twenty days, German troops advanced 600 kilometers, reached the Volga, and found themselves on the outskirts of Stalingrad.

It is true that many of the details of those dramatic events reached us late, in fragments, or we did not know about them at all. Something prompted "a soldier's body

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graph". Still, my heart was worried. They understood without any hints that a great threat loomed over the country.

In order to get out of the desperate situation in which the Red Army found itself, Stalin in 1942 and at the beginning of 1943 carried out three major political and organizational acts. Issued Order No. 227 "Not a step back!" (July 28, 1942). He liquidated the institution of commissars in the Red Army, which existed in it with separate interruptions from 1918 to 1942, i.e. almost twenty-four years. He introduced unity of command at all army levels and established uniform ranks (October 9, 1942). And, finally, he introduced officer ranks and shoulder straps.

Against the backdrop of what is happening, followed closely by people in Russia and the West, an event happened in Moscow - seemingly unremarkable, ordinary literature.

fact. But it caused a huge public outcry in the country, in the army and abroad. On the pages of Pravda, the newspaper of the Central Committee of the Party, from August 24 to 27, 1942, Alexander Korneychuk's play Front was published in four issues in four issues, unexpectedly for everyone.

The question immediately arose: why did the main party newspaper all of a sudden give such a "great honor" to this play? Everyone understood that the publication of the play on the pages of Pravda would have been unthinkable without the prompting of the highest authority. But what happened next explained a lot, but not everything.

The unthinkable happened. In the discussion of the play "in a planned manner" the party organs involved the broad masses of the population, the press, the radio, and the army. Separate excerpts were read from the stage. The best theaters staged the play on their stages. Among them are three leading Moscow theaters: the Moscow Art Theater, the Maly Academic Theatre, and the Central Theater of the Red Army. The roles of the heroes of the play were played by famous actors.

I looked through the foreign responses about the play that was released, what was said about it. Among them, two essays seemed especially interesting and original: "Around the Front"

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and "On the Public Front", published in the journal "Socialist Herald". Their author is literary critic Vera Aleksandrova. They say more truth than in the official Soviet press, and most importantly, they express the right idea about "who" and "what" is behind the play.

WHAT IS THE PIECE DEDICATED TO?

I will briefly introduce the reader to the content of Alexander Korneichuk's play The Front.

There are two heroes in the center of the plot: front commander Ivan Gorlov and army commander Ognev. Gorlov, the hero of the Civil War, learned to fight not in academies, but in battle, but in reality, as the playwright writes, this man personifies the "past", "obsolete" in the Red Army: limited thinking, ignorance, old military methods that do not correspond to modern principles of warfare. The main quality of a commander, in his opinion, is personal courage and audacity. He surrounded himself with military commanders, comrades in the Civil War.

Opposed to him is a talented young commander, Major General Ognev. Gorlov does not hide his feelings for Ognev: "He began to fight as a colonel. Three months later, he

received a real major, and now he is the commander of the army. Here's the head spinning. And little strength. Well, I started to cheat."

Ognev does not hide his feelings for Gorlov. When he issues an order on how to get out of the German encirclement, and boasts of the "impudence" of the plan, Ognev immediately retorts: "You are talking about impudence. There is no arrogance in this order. There is no thought in it, everything is taken with a bang, with a "maybe", as if the enemy in front of us is a fool or asleep ... "

Gorlov keeps his high post not by the army, not

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Alexandrova V. "Around the Front". "Social Bulletin". 1942, December 3. No. 21(22);
"On the public front. "Social Bulletin". 1943, 7 April. No. 7/8.

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devotion of ordinary fighters, but the apparatus of power. He is supported by "correspondents" of the central press like Khripun. Regarding one of these parasites flattering Ivan Gorlov, Gorlov's brother, Miron, exclaims: "Lord, when will fools, ignoramuses, sycophants, coots, scoundrels, finally disappear from our land?" Bottom line: "It's too late to think. We must beat these narcissistic ignoramuses, beat them to pieces, beat them to pieces, and quickly replace them with other, new, young, talented people. Otherwise, our great cause may be ruined." This is perhaps the main idea of the play.

The finale of the play is already known to the audience at the very beginning of the action. An order comes from Moscow to remove Ivan Gorlov from his post as commander of the front and to appoint Major General Ognev in his place.

The play, which criticizes empty talk, bureaucracy, for arrogance, unwillingness to understand the meaning of the new strategy and tactics of war, seemed to many Soviet generals, especially participants in the Civil War (not yet finished off by I.V. Stalin), seemed to be a shock to the foundations of the Red Army. The play seemed to "explain" to everyone "who is to blame" and "what to do" in order to defeat the enemy.

The author of the play found "scapegoats" - this is the generation of commanders of the Red Army who advanced in the Civil War and over the past years "grew up" on their laurels and turned into idlers and "red pompadours".

When the play was printed, the "highest permission" for freedom of opinion was received. Of course, within the framework of the content of the play. "To an outsider," writes Vera Alexandrova, "unfamiliar with the peculiarities of Soviet life, the play may seem like a genuine shock to all and every foundation of life. But people must understand that nothing is done in Soviet society without permission.

from above ... "And then the conclusion follows:" In the days when the fate of Stalingrad and the whole country was being decided, "it was necessary to give the army and society at least a semblance of freedom, to speak out about the events ... For the most daring criticism, once

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decided from above is less dangerous than the most timid and tongue-tied criticism of the "whisperers" from below."

At the front, the play caused a mixed reaction. "Confused" those who are not indifferent, made those who are usually indifferent think about it. Many were confused, did not know how to continue to behave. Especially political workers. The writer Pavlenko spoke truthfully about this confusion, "embarrassment" in the pages of the October magazine (1943). By chance, on the day when Pravda began to publish the play, he ended up at the front in the political department of one of the divisions. "The head of the political department," writes Pavlenko, "raising his head from the newspaper page, said in confusion: "Some kind of scandalous story ... Have you read it?" and handed me a newspaper. I started from the front line, but the head of the political department, noticing this, hastily added: "No, no, you look at the Play ..."

There were many lost. Fear arose among some Soviet people, a premonition of a new pogrom in the army. This was evidenced by letters and responses to the play in the press. The writer was not one of those "embarrassed." In his opinion, the play gives rise to the courage to fight with everything that has outlived itself. "She teaches: whoever does not fight against the old is himself outdated and no longer needed by his time. The play makes the reader, and even more so the viewer, think that the fate of the Motherland is in his hands. That the same hands could save or destroy her." Approximately at this level was all the official Soviet criticism.

The writer is cunning. Who is responsible for military miscalculations? He knew. As far as I remember, during the entire Stalinist era, the so-called "free criticism" was allowed for the Soviet people for the first and last time.

HOW THE FRONT RECEIVED THE PLAY

The echo of that "storm in a teacup", as we understand today, 60 years later, reached our division. Somewhere in the beginning of 1943, officers and political workers of the regimental level were gathered to hear their opinion on the play "Front".

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Opened the officer's collection of divisional commander. It would be interesting to know what he himself thinks about the play, what hero is he for? They did not hear. General Poplavsky gave the floor to Boriso-

wu to his deputy for political affairs.

"The play was published in the newspaper Pravda," he said frankly and frankly, "and if so, then, naturally, it reflects the opinion of the Central Committee of the Party. But this does not mean that we communist front-line soldiers do not have the right to our own opinion and free speech. This is the specialty of this moment. The main political department wants to know the opinion of the front-line soldiers about the play. You should not be afraid of reproaches or complications in the service. It is about the fate of the country. The sooner we overcome the shortcomings in the Red Army, which are discussed in the play, the sooner we will defeat the enemy!

The battalion commissar Kirill Akimovich Koshman set the tone for the speeches: "Not a play, but some kind of misunderstanding. Look at our commanders, commanders. Almost all of them participated in the Civil War. "They didn't finish the academies," and which of us will throw a stone at them? What's in them from the throat? Nothing! I don't see any conflict." (Reference: in a code and a half Koshman will become a regimental commissar. For courage and heroism when crossing the Neman, he will be awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. After the war, he will graduate from the Military-Political Academy and serve in the army until he retires.)

The commander of the regiment, Colonel Razumovsky, asked for the floor: "I would like to ask the comrade playwright about this. Is it the fault of Gorlov that everyone fled from the border in 1941 in underpants? General Pavlov, apparently from the Ognevs, fought in Spain, Hero of the Soviet Union. But he could not hold the front. For this he paid. Major General Ognev would have saved the situation at that time - I doubt it. At the same time, the play makes you think about the obsolete in the army. We need new Field Manuals, a restructuring of the entire communications system, a more active study of combat

experience."

The chief's speech sounded emotional

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Divisional Engineering Service. The colonel-engineer with a gray head said: "Let's look at ourselves through the eyes of the heroes of the play "Front" and think about this. In 41 he served on the old border. We dismantled some fortified areas and built new ones. I'll give you an example. If the commander of the Brest garrison had taken full responsibility on himself on the first day of the war, the enemy would not have been able to cross the Bug River. By the beginning of the war, there were large forces of the Red Army on this section of the western border. Well trained personnel troops. Are there not such military leaders among us today?" Someone threw a line: "Give me an example." The Colonel did not hesitate. Calmly but answered: "You know."

The division chief of staff, without hesitation, rudely

sewed on a play:

Who does Comrade Korneichuk take us for? The play is bad. This is a frank attempt to drive a wedge between different generations of commanders.

The officers made noise, gave remarks, interrupted the speakers. The commander tried to calm everyone down. 30-year-old Lieutenant Colonel Tolya Kochergin, commander of an artillery regiment, spoke even more sternly: "Glavpur wants to know our opinion," he said, "please, comrades of Glavpur, as the Ukrainians say, this is not a play, but sheer "nonsense." Where did the comrade playwright see the throats, these cavalrymen? Yes, they were cleared out of the army even before the war. Someone upstairs decided to dump their own sins on the heroes of the Civil War..." I heard the head of the division's special department hissing not far from me: "What is he saying, scoundrel? Lock him up! Yes, you can't. Zapom NIM.

I looked at Leonid Fedorovich Borisov, and I felt sorry for him. He himself was very embarrassed. Probably, he did not expect such a stormy reaction, mostly negative, to the play, but, as he believed, it came out against the will of the Central Committee of the party. He suggested curtailing the speeches. "Everything seems to be clear..."

The whirlwind of emotions around the play and its discussion captured everyone, and it took a long time for people to cool down.

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Why didn't the front accept Korneichuk's play? I thought about it and came to the following conclusion. It's not about being offended. We, front-line soldiers, were defamed, and more than once, by all sorts of "roots". Obviously, after reading the play, many saw behind the curtain raised for a short while supposedly "free thought" something that they had long ago lost the habit of thinking about. But no one - from generals to ordinary officers - dared to look more closely at "this is something like that." Speak openly about it.

Unfortunately, few of us then understood that the playwright fulfilled the party task as well as he could. He wrote an agitation play, and Stalin raised it to an almost unattainable height.

Why? Stalin understood perfectly well that the second year of the war was underway, and the army, and the people, the world community were increasingly asking the question: "how could a catastrophe happen in 1941?" Suppose then he explained what had happened by the suddenness of the attack. In the 42nd, there could no longer be surprise. Again, a disaster. And what! What are the reasons, who is to blame for all this huge tragedy in the history of Russia?

With Stalin, as with Hitler, political considerations always outweighed military ones. The play "Front" should have explained to millions of anxious people: it is not Comrade Stalin, the Supreme Chief, who is to blame for the new catastrophes.

but the commander, and army errors generated by Gore LOV ...

It is known that Stalin, until his death, did not admit his guilt either for shameful defeats or for innumerable human losses, which have not yet been accurately calculated, that is, in fact, for the death of several generations of Soviet people.

In every democratic country, such crimes are judged to the fullest extent of the law.

A few words about Marshal Konev... With a soldier's bluntness, he told Stalin what he thought of the play. Could Ivan Stepanovich tell Iosif Vissarionovich that the game he started was "dishonest"? Of course not!

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How was the play received at the top of the army? Let's get acquainted with the memoirs of General Shtemenko:

"Unexpectedly, she (the play) appeared on the pages of Pravda and excited the entire officer corps of the army. And although in our General Staff every minute counted, the play was read even by the busiest. With all our hearts we were on the side of young Ognev and spoke out against Gorlov...

Both in the General Staff and outside it, even among the very distinguished military leaders, there were those who perceived the play "Front" as a kind of sabotage against the Red Army. The Headquarters received several telegrams demanding that the play be stopped in Pravda and that it be banned from being staged in theaters, as a very harmful thing.

We, the youth of the General Staff, if I may say so about the people of the middle leadership, who are not yet old in age, perceived the "Front" as an expression of the policy of the party, as its call to raise the level of our military art and methods of commanding troops.

HOW THE MOSCOW INTELLIGENTIA RECEIVED THE PLAY

Let's try to find out how the Moscow intelligentsia perceived the play, what the actors who played it thought about it. The famous writer Vsevolod Ivanov tells about this in the book "Diaries and Letters. Moscow notebooks.

In 1942, the writer returned from evacuation to Moscow and wrote down his impressions: about what was happening in the capital, about interesting people, about the cultural life of the city, which continued in wartime. Here are some

from these texts: "... In the evening (November 7, Saturday, 1942) we were at the Front, at the Moscow Art Theater. The play is played by three theaters at once - or rather, all the available theaters in Moscow. They say she goes better in Maly than in Moscow Art Theater, but I don't believe this -

[Shtemenko S.M. General Staff during the war. M.: Voe izdat, 1943. Book one. Second edition. pp. 123-124.

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she's very bad. People, like horses, are divided into old and young, and the talent of the young is not dramaturgically justified. Knowledge of front-line affairs does not help, but hinders the playwright, he talks about the offensive in such detail that you can't understand what they are arguing about? The play is similar to the many production plays that we have seen in order. The audience shines with orders ... "

In the same diary entry, the writer recalls the words of Boris Pasternak: "If it were possible to win battles with plays, I would watch them every day. But if you can't, then why put it? - subtle and reasonable characterization.

Writer's sketch: "The hotel lobby is empty. The comedian Lunch climbs into the bodice with us. He was also at the "Front", but in the Drama Theater.

- Well, how?

"It's boring," and it's clear that it's so boring that he can't find a definition.

Another excerpt from the memoirs of Vsevolod Ivanov: "On November 20, Pravda published an article about the Front, proving that the Artistic and Maly Academic Theaters are nothing compared to the Drama Theater. That is, Livanov found himself in the same position as Gorlov. The mechanical situation with the command staff has been transferred to the realm of art. Livanov tossed about, tousled the remnants of his hair, shouted that he was dead, he would leave the theater.

- They gave me to understand that this is not a play, but they played "Front" as a directive" =

Further, Vsevolod Ivanov writes: "Sometimes you think that knowledge lags behind positions. The Front's lie is not that such events do not happen, that people do not want to study, but that there is no time to study, and no one, and most importantly, a short time. We are shortening it, we want to fit a century into a five-year plan, but it, damned, lay like a layer, and lies ... "

... It is interesting to read the writer's story about the discussion of the play by the generals in the Central Theater of the Red Army:

"It began with the fact that the general with a face like a lampshade said:

- Does comrade Korneichuk know that the "Front"

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vyat in Berlin? In a word, they groaned as much as they could (the fact is unusual).

When, at the end of the 20th century, armored safes with "top secret materials" were partially opened in Russia, history pronounced its verdict on Stalin and his "cunning hypocritical game" around the play "Front". Who remembers her today, who knows her?

It turns out that in modern Russia there are people (and there are quite a few of them) who honor Stalin holier than the Pope, remember and know the play "Front". In 2003, the Moscow publishing house "Eksmo-Algorithm" on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the death of I.V. Stalin published a ten-volume "Staliniana". A book from this series called "Commander Stalin" (authors Boris Solovyov and Vladimir Sukhodeev) tells about Alexander Korneichuk's play "Front". (pp. 80-281).

Let's take a look at the printed text:

"JV Stalin showed extraordinary concern for the development of literature, science and art. Here are some of the more salient facts. In 1942, A.E. Korneichuk wrote the play "Front". It dealt with the attitude towards the conduct of the Patriotic War... I.V. Stalin immediately appreciated the merits of the play and recommended it for publication in the Pravda newspaper... It caused various reviews, including sharply negative ones. In the archives of I.V. Stalin, correspondence about this play has been preserved. On August 28, 1942, the commander of the North-Western Front, S.K. Timoshenko, sent a telegram to I.V. Stalin, in which he noted: "The play of Comrade. Korneichuk deserves special attention. This play will harm us for all ages, it must be removed. The author should be held accountable, the perpetrators, in this regard, should be sorted out.

On the same day, J.V. Stalin replied to S.K. / Timoshenko with the following telegram:

"North-Western Front. Marshal
Timoshenko

I received your telegram about Korneichuk's play The Front. You are wrong about the play. The play will be of great educational value for the Red Army and its Komso

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As it stands, the play correctly points out the shortcomings of the Red Army, and it would be wrong to turn a blind eye to these shortcomings. One must have the courage to admit shortcomings and take steps to eliminate them. This is the only way to improve and perfect the Red Army.

I. Stalin.

Stalin sends the playwright a copy of S. K. Moshenko's telegram and his reply to him. He advises: "... the playwright should refine his work, make it more relevant." (Note, not more artistic, but more relevant!)

The play "Front" was a great success in those years in many theaters of the country. Stalin suggested making a film based on the play. It was staged by directors S.D.Vasiliev and G.N.Vasiliev (famous Soviet directors who shot the film "Chapaev" in 1934). The motion picture was shown in cinemas and clubs, heated discussions took place everywhere, which in many respects contributed to the correct understanding of the essence of the nature of the Great Patriotic War, its conduct by modern methods.

Let me comment on the passage. What does the story about the role of Stalin in the development of literature, science and art during the war years have to do with the topic "Commander"? It occupies almost 14 pages in the book. But, probably, according to the authors, it allows to explain the appearance of the play "Front". Here's a clever move they came up with.

It is unlikely that the playwright would have undertaken to write such a sharp political play, affecting the authority of the generals and officers without permission from above, on his own initiative. Of this I am sure!

In a reply telegram to S.K. Timoshenko, Stalin clearly defines his idea of the further conduct of the war without the Gorlovs.

Pushkin called Ekaterina P for her hypocrisy "TGartyu fom in a skirt." The hypocrisy and cunning of Stalin with the production of the play "Front" are boundless! What is there mother-tsa ritsa!

Iosif Vissarionovich also knew about the production of Korneichu

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like in Berlin. Goebbels' idea: "Look, comrades, what a collapse the Red Army has reached!"

In Russia, the play was staged by the best theaters. Directive!..

Using its unlimited power, referring to

cunning and cunning, Stalin tried to ward off the blame for his miscalculations. This is the famous Stalinist speech on July 3, 1941, this is the execution of the entire command of the Western Front, headed by General Pavlov, this is an attempt to blame the defeats near Vyazma and Moscow on the military. These are the famous Stalinist orders No. 270 and No. 227. How many heads of honest people flew and how many had to fly - for the sake of one? How false and demagogic sounded the speech of I.V. Stalin after the war at a reception in the Kremlin in honor of the commanders of the Red Army - May 24, 1945. "... Our Government," he said, "had a lot of mistakes, we had moments of desperate situation in 1941-1942, when our army retreated, left our native villages and cities. Another people could say to the government: you have not lived up to our expectations, go away, we will install another government that will make peace with Germany and ensure peace for us. But the Russian people did not agree to this, because they believed in the correctness of the policy of their government and made sacrifices in order to ensure the defeat of Germany. And this confidence of the Russian people in the Soviet government turned out to be the decisive force that ensured the historic victory over the enemy of mankind - over fascism.

Lord, how much hypocrisy, demagoguery and outright lies are in this "Speech" ...

Stalin and Hitler had much in common. Like the "great Soviet commander", the "German genius" also liked to shift his own miscalculations and failures onto other people's shoulders, most often onto his generals.

It is known that for the failure of the "blitzkrieg" in the battle of Moscow, Hitler blamed the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces of the German Army, Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch - he made other generals "scapegoats" out of him and other generals. Together with Brauchitsch, Hitler dismissed 34 generals ...

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Brief information about the command staff of the Red Army

After the end of the Civil War, the Red Army was reduced tenfold. Of the left command staff, approximately 30% were former officers of the Russian army. Many of them occupied the highest army posts.

From the end of the 1920s to the end of the 1930s, 47,000 commanders were dismissed from the RKKA. Most of them are officers who received their command ranks during the First World War. Those of them who miraculously escaped the Stalinist repressions actively participated in the Great Patriotic War: Boris Shaposhnikov, Alexei Antonov, Alexander

Vasilevsky, Leonid Govorov, Ivan Petrov, Fedor Tolbukhin and many other excellent commanders.

Basically, all front commanders, as well as forty army commanders, began their combat path in the First World War.

After the tornado that hit the Red Army (1937-1938), there were not enough commanders in the commanding level, including the Navy (as a percentage): 1938 - 34.0, 1939 - 32.0, 1941 - 19.0.

For example, if 19% is translated into the real number of commanders, then this will amount to 80 thousand people.

By the beginning of the war, the Red Army felt not only the lack of commanders. At Headquarters, the command staff did not have the necessary professional education. This can be seen from the following data: they had an education (as a percentage): higher - 7.0, secondary - 60.0, accelerated secondary - 25.0, without education (general and vocational) - 8.0.

These sad statistics are explained by Stalin's "purges", during which more than 40,000 commanders were repressed. Naturally, there were massive displacements of commanders in the Red Army.

In the ten months of 1938, 58,000 commanders were promoted to new positions and 40,000 people were displaced.

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1939 was a special year for the Red Army. New positions were filled by 246,626 commanders, which accounted for 69.0% of the total command staff. As a result of unthinkable personnel reshuffling, by the time the war began, more than half of the command staff had held their new positions for up to three months ...

While in their new positions for no more than six months, many commanders (more than half of the top command staff of the army) at the same time led large formations.

The annual graduation of commanders from military schools in the pre-war period lagged behind the growth, primarily from the special branches of the armed forces. For example, in 1938-1941 the number of armored troops increased by 5.9 times, and the graduation of commanders from higher military schools for this type of troops increased by 1.6 times.

Trying to keep up with the times - the technical re-equipment of the army, from July 1939 to December 1940, 47 new military schools were opened in the country. But by the beginning of the war, none of them managed to release their commanders. In total, in 1941 there were 234 military schools in the USSR.

In addition to the opening of new schools in 1937-1940, a wide network of special courses for the training of platoon commanders was transformed in the army itself. They trained 448,300 junior lieutenants in a short period of time. They acquired the necessary experience already on the battlefield.

In an attempt to overcome the crisis in military personnel, primarily middle-level personnel, in military schools even in the prewar years they reduced the training period for cadets from three to one and a half years, which, naturally, affected the quality of training for commanders.

After the start of the war, very soon the terms of training cadets in military schools were reduced to six months ... Often, in difficult periods of the war, schools sent cadets to the front after three or four months of training. Commander ranks in such cases were assigned to them after the first battles.

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Cadets' brigades and battalions

Until now, the fate of many schools, as well as their pupils, is not completely known.

Despite the measures taken to train command personnel in the army, by the beginning of the first year of the war, the active units lacked 160,000 commanders. I had to urgently call for reservists from the reserve. Unfortunately, there are no exact data on the number of commanders from the reserve who joined the army.

From the first days of the war, the Supreme Commander, seeing that events at the front were not unfolding according to his will, began to look for a "scapegoat" in order to divert the people's anger from himself for the major failures of the Red Army and thereby save his reputation. In 1941, for the slaughter of that "goat", he gave six Soviet generals for execution, who could not hold the Western Front.

Who knew (July 1941) that the Germans concentrated 4 times more mobile forces for the offensive in the Western direction. They considered this direction to be the main one. But the "great strategist" thought differently.

In 1942 - a new huge trouble. And again, through the fault of the "great commander", as already described. So the play "Front" appeared. She became the new scapegoat. Both the performance itself and all the unimaginable hype around it were supposed to distract people from any mistakes of the leader.

But some Muscovites shrewdly called the Piesu a "lightning rod" - not badly invented ...

Many actions of the dictator in wartime are evidence that deceit, cynicism, the habit of shifting one's own blame onto others, deftly and quickly finding "scapegoats" - everything was explained by confidence in one's own impunity.

The dictator cared little who might be his next "favorite goat." For a sophisticated and insidious politician, morality, public opinion, rank and rank, past merits did not play any role.

It is known that even its chief state

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assistant for decades - comrade Vyacheslav Molotov, when he considered it "expedient", sold for half a penny, blaming him for the diplomatic pact with Germany.

In this text, the story is about a potential "goat".

This event took place during the Battle of Moscow on October 21, 1941. On that day, Stalin called the editor of the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper, David Ortenberg, and instructed that the Decree of the State Defense Committee (GKO) on the appointment of G.K.

Comrade Stalin simultaneously asked for a large photograph of the general to be printed in the newspaper. This has never been done before.

What does this mean?

Comrade Stalin decided to demonstrate before his people, before the enemy, before the whole world a man who has been entrusted with the highest responsibility for the defense of Moscow. But in the event of a possible defeat, public opinion will immediately take his side, which will help him "honestly" make a responsible "goat ...

Zhukov knew perfectly well the habits of his Kremlin patron and did not expect anything good from him. How many times has a dictator resorted to such tricks!

"In war, any idea of love for humanity is a pernicious delusion, an absurdity."

Karl Clausewitz, Prussian general and military theorist of the APH c.

BATTLE OF TWO DICTATORS

A wise old Ukrainian proverb says: "The gentlemen fight, and the serfs crack their forelocks." It is clear that the whole war, from beginning to end, turned out to be a cruel and uncompromising battle between two dictators - Stalin and Hitler. However, the months-long Battle of Rzhev for them was not only of particular strategic importance, but also of ambitious interest.

First dictator

No matter how bad the situation on the fronts was in 1942, Stalin constantly did not lose sight of Rzhev. He could not come to terms with the idea that the bridgehead near Rzhev and Vyazma was in the hands of the Germans.

After strong physical and mental upheavals in 1941, barely catching his breath and slightly restoring his former self-confidence, Stalin became more and more demanding every day.

This was no longer the confused person who, according to the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov, in the critical days of the battles for the capital, asked him in an anxious voice: "Are you sure that we will keep Moscow? I ask you about this with pain in my heart..." This was no longer the hysterical Stalin who in 1941, having called I.S. Konev to the front, urged the General, speaking of himself in the third person: "Comrade Stalin is not a traitor, Comrade Stalin is not a traitor, Comrade Sta

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Lin is an honest man. His whole mistake is that he trusted the cavalymen too much... Comrade Stalin will do everything in his power to rectify the situation."

The defeat of the Germans near Moscow gave him new strength, inspired him, gave hope to his heart that in the end he would cope with Hitler. And maybe soon. Despite the first military successes, a resolute militant attitude, Stalin was still constantly haunted by some personal feelings. There was no way he could switch off, forget his experiences, and perhaps even the humiliation he experienced in front of the same Zhukov or Konev. How he, though not for a long time, lost the strong-willed iron beginning of the leader of the world proletariat. For the first time in his life, he was seized with an unthinkable fear when the advanced German detachments approached Moscow to within 17-20 kilometers.

Stalin tried not to remember those terrible days and heavy, sleepless nights. He was deeply convinced of the need to capture Rzhev as soon as possible at any cost, to drive the Germans away from Moscow! He believed, and not without reason, that while the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead was in the hands of the enemy, this was in fact a serious chance for Hitler to try his luck again. Knowing Stalin's wild stubbornness, no one in the Headquarters dared not only to convince, but even sow the slightest doubt that his fears were unfounded.

In his "Memoirs" G.K. Zhukov says: "... The Supreme assumed that the Germans in the summer of 1942 would be able to conduct major offensive operations simultaneously in two strategic directions, most likely in Moscow and in the south of the country. Most of all, Stalin feared for Moscow, where there were more than 70 enemy divisions. He believed that Hitler, without taking Moscow, would not throw his troops to seize the Caucasus and the south of the country.

'Simonov K. From the book "Through the Eyes of a Man of My Generation". Publication in the memoirs of I.S. Konev, Notes of the Front Commander. M.: Voice, 2002. S. 121.

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Marshal's memories are extremely important. They suggest a few additional topics for reflection. During the offensive in the south, the Fuhrer did not allow his headquarters to touch the Central Front. Even when the 6th Army of Paulus was surrounded, his position did not change.

In the book of General S.M. Shtemenko "The General Staff during the War Years" contains numerous reminiscences of how Stalin was worried about the fate of Moscow, how he forced the General Staff officers to constantly monitor the actions of the central group of German troops. Any reports of the Headquarters of the General Staff of the Supreme considered from the standpoint of a threat to Moscow.

During the battles at Stalingrad and even in the Battle of Kursk, Stalin did not rule out, just as during the existence of the Rzhev salient, that in the final analysis the main goal of the Germans was Moscow.

During the Battle of the Kursk-Oryol Bulge, when Hitler postponed the start of the offensive three times, Stalin was always nervous. He believed that the German command might have changed its strategic plans and would send its armies, again, to Moscow.

In the incorrect definition of the main strategic direction of the enemy offensive in the summer campaign of 1942, not only Stalin, but also the General Staff is to blame. Hitler signed the most secret Directive No. 41 codenamed "Blau" on April 5, 1942. She contained

strategic plan of the German command of the summer campaign of the war on the Eastern Front - in 1942. The main task was to destroy the enemy west of the Don and capture the Caucasus (oil regions), and then the Stalingrad direction was envisaged.

Soviet intelligence obtained information about Hitler's plans in a timely manner, even before he signed Directive No. 41. (See Vladimir Lotta's article "Secret Front of the General Staff", Internet.) However, neither the Stavka nor the General Staff were able to use this valuable information. As a result, in 1942, again as in 1941 near Moscow, in the Stalingrad region, the position of the Red Army

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mission proved to be critical. This can be explained mainly by the position of the Supreme. Stalin believed for a long time, and we have already said about this, that the main task of the Germans remains the same: to capture Moscow, this time outflanking it from the south. Trying to prevent its collapse in the south, the Headquarters urgently sent huge reinforcements there. Only in two and a half months (from July 17 to September 30), according to M.A. Gareev (given by him in the book about G.K. Zhukov), 50 rifle and cavalry divisions, 33 brigades, including 24 tank ones, were sent to Stalingrad.

Stalin was not in vain maniacally worried about the fate of Moscow. In 2002, the two-volume "Battle of Stalingrad" was published in Moscow - a jubilee edition dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad. At the same time, it covers many events related to the situation on the Central Front in 1942-1943.

The first document is the "Minutes of the interrogation of Field Marshal Keitel Wilhelm dated June 17, 1945 (book 2, pp. 542-546)". Here is what the field marshal said during the interrogation: "The plan of the 43rd year provided for, in case of special success (on the Kursk ledge), the possibility of moving northeast in order to cut the railways leading from Moscow to the south ..."

The arguments of Russian historians about the weakening of the Central Front and the transfer of part of the German divisions in 1942 near Stalingrad are invented. Let's get acquainted with a few more documents from this edition. The second document confirms our conclusions even more convincingly: "From the recording of a conversation with Field Marshal Paulus. It took place on 8.06. 1948". (Ibid., book 2, pp. 554-558.)

"Question: How can one explain that during the summer and autumn of 1942 the German command kept large forces in the Moscow direction?

Answer: At that time, the German command was expecting

Russian offensive from Moscow, which could be a counterbalance to the German offensive in the south. In connection with

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with this, a corresponding grouping was created in the Moscow direction. The German grouping created here simultaneously threatened Moscow, and the Russian command could not maneuver its reserves to the south, since at any moment it could get the impression that a German offensive was possible, although it did not

elk".

And further:

"... IT WAS THOUGHT THAT IN 1942 the line of the rivers Don and the Caucasus should be occupied, and in 1943 an attack on Moscow should begin. If the task of reaching Stalingrad had been completed in 1942, then the attack on Moscow could only have been possible in 1943..."

Wishing to show his "commander's genius" (and Stalin believed in him after the collapse of the German blitzkrieg), he confidently assumed the duties of the Supreme Commander, as Hitler had done earlier. The scale and tragedy of the months-long battles near Rzhev, tiny successes and grandiose defeats - all this, as history has shown, in large and small largely depended on the will of the dictator. I have no doubt that if Stalin had not been constantly and rudely intervening in the Rzhev battles, perhaps the successes would have been great, less blood would have been shed.

During one of the meetings with military historians, G.K. Zhukov spoke about how primitive Stalin thought as a commander. "Stalin demanded that we advance! He said: 'If we don't have a result today, tomorrow we will, the more you will pin down the enemy, and at this time the result will be in other areas.'" Of course, this is childish reasoning! There were many victims, the expenditure of material resources was large, but there was no overall strategic result. And one more conclusion about the Supreme: "Stalin has long been accustomed to operating on the lives of millions of people. 'This is the mass, and he is the leader.'" I was convinced that this has always been the case in history. And so it will always be. "Having familiarized myself with many hundreds of operational documents dictated or signed by Stalin during the four years of the war," writes D. Volkogonov, "I did not seem to meet

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not a single one where he set the task of protecting people, not throwing them into unprepared attacks, and showing concern for the preservation of their fellow citizens.

Stalin and Hitler directly led the battles for Rzhev. When making any decisions about combat operations, Sta-

Lin (Hitler did the same), as a rule, ignored any front-line conditions: the composition of the troops, their way of life, equipment, equipment, logistics, weather, terrain. He, like Hitler, was little interested in the enemy, his armament, tactical and operational capabilities. He never knew what this or that combat area was like, the details of those real conditions in which people are obliged to obey his orders.

At the same time, Stalin, being the Supreme Commander, like Hitler, constantly intervened in the actions of his military leaders, right up to the Berlin operation. As G.K. Zhukov writes in "Memoirs and Reflections", "... his professional knowledge was insufficient not only at the beginning of the war, but also until its very end." In the Rzhev epic, this intervention took on an inconceivable and painful, illogical, and often petty character. When making the final decision on operations, Stalin set the exact dates for their preparation and conduct. Often this led to the suppression of the will of military leaders. Without instructions from the Supreme Commander, as a rule, this was done on behalf of the Headquarters, but under his signature, neither the commanders, nor the commanders, and often the commanders of divisions, could show any self-interest in any operation.

value.

The commanders were actually deprived of the operational initiative - to act in accordance with local conditions. "The lack of initiative of officers and generals," says the English military historian Kenneth Maxey, "in the presence of the "sovereign eye" had a literally catastrophic effect on the fighting qualities of Soviet troops in offensive operations." The opinion of the Germans is curious. They believed that, for example, once surrounded, Soviet commanders and soldiers acted excellently,

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if they lost contact with the higher authorities. As soon as communication was restored, the loss of initiative immediately became more noticeable.

Often what Stalin proclaimed in his public speeches, directives of the Stavka, in orders, in letters, telegrams, diverged from reality. Naturally, this put the commanders in a difficult position, caused bewilderment, and irritation, and resentment, and bitter disappointment of the soldiers. In such cases, unexpected situations usually tried to correct the commissars. For example, how many times have we heard how the Supreme Commander promised to defeat the enemy and end the war in 1942 and 1943, and damn it, it continued. In 1942, Stalin claimed that the German army was at its last "gasp", and the Red Army in the same 1942 suffered terrible defeats from the "Breaking Army": near Rzhev, lost Crimea, got into big trouble near Kharkov, surrendered Voronezh and Rostov-on-Don, allowed the Germans to

take vast expanses in the south.

Under Rzhev, the Soviet troops were confronted by a strong enemy under the leadership of the talented General Walter Model with the intention of holding out. After the winter retreat near Moscow, the 9th Army organized a powerful defense on the line they occupied in the Rzhev triangle. She fought fiercely for every pyal, as if it were her native land. Often, after the battle, front-line soldiers asked the question: "In the name of what are the Fritz fighting so staunchly and bravely?"

Little note. Under Rzhev, the commanders and we, the soldiers, learned to attack, and the Germans gained combat experience in active positional defense. Some historians and writers, for example V.V. Beshanov, are indignant at the statement of our generals that in 1942 they were still learning to fight. He even published a book, calling it "Year 1942 - Training" (Minsk: Harvest, 2002).

I will dwell on individual theses of the author. Here is what Beshanov writes: "... Generals everywhere, especially beaten ones, often complain about superiors, mistakes of subordinates, lack of

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power or adverse weather conditions. Soviet marshals also make extensive use of all these arguments. But, in addition, they came up with a completely unique excuse for their failures: it turns out that in 1942 they still did not know how to fight. All of them - leaders of the fronts, commanders of armies, chiefs of staff - report with childish spontaneity that they have so far only studied, looked closely at the enemy, and accumulated experience.

I think the author, in his ardent anger, is mistaken in not taking into account some serious circumstances that cannot be brushed aside. Beshanov does not like generals' speeches. Me too. Noah understands them, but he does not want to understand them. For example, is it possible to forget the mass repressions organized by Stalin in the pre-war period, when all the top cadres of the Red Army were destroyed? Their bloody shooting continued in 1941 and 1942 ... Finally, in 1941, after June 22, the entire regular army, including many generals and commanders, practically perished. In 1942, one had to choose not the best of the best, but the best of the worst. It should also be borne in mind that the Red Army entered into a battle with the most powerful army in the world, equipped with modern weapons, with experienced generals, with rich combat experience, with a higher command and control organization and a radio communication system, with professional soldiers.

What here can be "childish naivety"?

Speaking about the fact that they learned to fight, the commanders are not disingenuous. They were entrusted with commanding millions of armies -

mi, thousands of guns, new jet technology, hundreds of tanks and aircraft. They learned to lead large masses of troops. They had to be trained, armed, brought into battle in time, and the interaction of people and equipment had to be organized. But to manage troops without modern means of communication, without professionally trained commanders of regiments, battalions, companies, competently trained soldiers - under the "sovereign's eye" ... Here are our generals

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turned out to be not very capable students. Hence the endless defeats near Rzhev, huge losses, constant fear of the authorities for every failure. And this is with a grandiose advantage in manpower and technology. Yes! They learned to fight, but the price of this study for everyone - from the Supreme Commander to the platoon commander - turned out to be unimaginably heavy. Who can calculate how much it cost?

But, amazing as it may seem, the front-line soldiers, shamelessly scolding the commanders for their illiteracy in every way, called everything that happened on the battlefields the "Rzhev Academy", went into battle and believed that their commanders would learn to fight no worse than the Germans. . "Even on our bones..." World history is full of examples where the vanquished learned from the victors. Peter [did not consider it shameful for himself to learn from the most powerful Swedish army at that time, King Charles HIP. Before the war in the East, German generals diligently studied the sad experience of the Russian campaign of Napoleon's Grand Army in Russia...

Stalin closely followed his generals, clearly saw their miscalculations. Repeatedly, getting angry, he exclaimed: "When will they learn to fight?!" At the same time, he stubbornly forced them to succeed at any cost. He believed that the time would come and they would learn to win. They will fight not by numbers, but by skill. Definitely, you are scientists of the Supreme, they tried to defeat the enemy not with skill, but with colossal manpower and the power of military equipment. The generals were so accustomed to the simple methods of commanding their obedient soldiers that many of them did not begin to retrain in any way until the end of the war.

Dmitry Volkogonov in the book "I.V. Stalin - a political portrait. Triumph and Tragedy "(book P, part 1, p. 299), cites a remarkable conversation between Stalin and A.I. Antonov, head of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff. Here is a snippet from that conversation:

"Comrade Antonov," the Supreme Commander asked, "have you ever wondered why many of our offensive operations in 1942 turned out to be incomplete? Look, the Rzhev-Vyazemsky operation of two

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fronts... (Next, Stalin lists other "incomplete" operations.) How do you explain these failures?

- ... They acted in a stereotyped way, - Antonov answered, - without fiction. We did not learn how to break through the defenses in several sectors at once, we weakly used tank formations to develop success ... "

Stalin interrupted Antonov and concluded as follows: "The main thing is that, having learned to defend ourselves, we could not do well, and even now it's not much better to attack ..."

... In short, we have not yet learned how to fight ... "

By the way, the phrase "unfinished operation" instead of "failure", "defeat" belongs to Stalin. She was so fond of the generals that in their reports to the top, with a clear conscience, they introduced her into a constant "circulation".

During the battles in Rzhev, as well as on other fronts, the Headquarters developed and sent to the troops the so-called Directives. They determined the strategic and operational-tactical tasks of each operation, outlined the timing of the preparation and start of its implementation. During the war years, the Stavka sent several thousand Directives to the troops. A collection has been published in Moscow that makes it possible to review this colossal work of the Headquarters and the General Staff. Let's get acquainted with the eight Directives, from January 1942 to February 1943. All of them are connected with Rzhev...

Headquarters directive of January 7, 1942. Signed by Stalin. It set the task for the Kalinin Front: "two armies consisting of 14-15 rifle divisions and the 11th cavalry corps to carry out an offensive west of Rzhev in the general direction of Sychevka. Defeat the German forces and, together with the Western Front, encircle and destroy the enemy's Rzhev-Gzhatsk-Vyazma grouping."

Implementation of the Directive. The Kalinin Front on January 8 began the so-called Rzhev-Vyazemsky operation. It continued until April 20th. In the course of 120 daytime battles, three armies found themselves surrounded by the Germans: the 22nd, 29th and 39th, as well as the 11th cavalry corps. That's how

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A.M.Vasilevsky, Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, tells about this operation: "...Several times Soviet corps and entire armies crossed the defense of the bridgehead with battles, leaving behind enemy lines. But behind them, the passage was again closed, because of which those who made their way to the rear of the enemy were surrounded.

Cut off from the front, the commanders and fighters fought courageously. In July 1942, German radio broadcast

message: "To the west of Rzhev, a hundred thousandth group of Soviet troops was surrounded and defeated." The final operation of the Germans under the name "Seidlitz" was carried out by them from 2 to 12 July 1942. The Soviet press did not refute the German report, but did not mention it either. This tragedy was subsequently ignored by historians, commanders and generals in their memoirs did not clearly tell anything about it. When the Stalingrad tragedy occurred for the German army, three days of mourning was declared in Germany. Surrendered 105 thousand generals, officers and soldiers of the 6th army of Paulus. In all churches

bells rang for them.

Gradually, individual episodes of the death of a hundred thousandth group west of Rzhev became known. Few surviving veterans told about it. The most important thing that contributed to the "declassification" of the Rzhev-Vyazemsky operation was the active role of the Supreme Commander in it. I'll give you one episode. A lot of them. In mid-February, the headquarters of the encircled 29th Army received Stalin's request on the radio: "What do you need to hold out for two days?" The commander of the 29th Army, V.I. Shevtsov, replied that two days could be held with air support. The Military Council of the Army sent a directive to the troops: "Comrade Stalin became aware of our situation. JV Stalin asked: "Will we be able to hold out?" Food and ammunition will be dropped from transport planes. As you can see, the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army, personally Comrade Stalin, considers the area we are defending very important and is taking measures to help us ... "

Warriors inspired by the promise of an early Stalin

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aid, fought the Germans beyond the limits of human capabilities. But Stalin and the fronts could do little to help the encircled. The air bridge organized by the Headquarters did not work either. As one of those who got out of the encirclement recalls, "it was a living hell." For example, he told how on one of those days fifteen German bombers dropped bombs on the village of Brekhovo, where seriously wounded were lying in all the houses. In a quarter of an hour, ashes were left from the people and the village.

The banners of the units were sent on the sent planes. One thousand wounded managed to be transferred with the broken parts to their own. Many senior commanders and commissars committed suicide. Some historians condemn the decision of the Headquarters and G.K. Zhukov to leave three armies and a cavalry corps in the German rear without sufficient support and evaluate his decision as an example of adventurism. Colonel M.M. Efremov, the son of the commander of the 33rd Army, Mikhail Grigorievich Efremov, who shot himself in the encirclement, tells about this convincingly and documented.

However, was it possible at all then, in January-February 1942, to speak of any serious support? The advancing troops did not have enough weapons, ammunition. The entire aviation of the Western Front consisted of less than a hundred aircraft. In those days when, bleeding, the last remnants of the fighters were dying west of Rzhev in the Chertolinsky forests, the Soviet Information Bureau reported: "On the Western Front, local battles are going on ..."

It is curious why the Rzhev-Vyazemskaya operation, the only one of the four carried out near Rzhev, fell into the historiography of the war as "strategic"?

During the Rzhev-Vyazemsk operation, I.S. Konev received the Headquarters Directive of January 11, 1942. It said: "To the Commander of the Kalinin Front during the 11th and in no case later than the 12th of January to capture the city of Rzhev. The Headquarters recommends using the artillery and mortars available in the area for this purpose."

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nye, aviation forces and smash the city of Rzhev with might and main, not stopping before serious destruction of the city. Confirm the order, deliver the execution. I.V. Sta LIN.

Implementation of the Directive. Neither January 11 nor January 12, 1942, Rzhev was taken. But, following the instructions of the Supreme Commander, artillery and Soviet aircraft destroyed the city. What the Germans did not do in their time. One can imagine the psychological state of the Rzhevites when bombs and shells fell on their heads from the Soviet side.

In his "Memoirs and Reflections", G.K. Zhukov explains the reasons for the "incompleteness" of the Rzhev-Vyazemsky offensive operation in 1942 by the troops of the Western and Kalinin fronts in this way: "Critically evaluating now these events of 1942, I believe that we time, an error was made in assessing the situation in the Vyazma region. We overestimated the capabilities of our troops and underestimated the enemy. The "nut" there turned out to be stronger than we expected." Can one agree with such an explanation?

Headquarters directive of March 20, 1942. "The Headquarters requires a more vigorous continuation of the previously set tasks. Release Rzhev no later than April 5 ... "

Implementation of the Directive. In those difficult spring days, G.K. Zhukov and I.S. Konev ask the Headquarters: to stop the fruitless and senseless self-destruction of the armies. Stalin does not even want to hear about the abolition of the Directives. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief demanded: "More energetic attacks." The dictator knew what he was doing. He taught the generals to fight at any cost, to be indifferent to the numbers of losses. In exchange for their consent, he forgave them for their failures.

Praised for tiny successes. The Soviet press colorfully painted them and passed them off as the increased military skill of the Red Army. Stalin instilled in his generals strong, forceful characters, freeing them from all sorts of moral doubts, accustomed them, like children, to personal devotion and faith in their infallibility. Understand boo

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if they appreciate his trust in them, if they learn to be unquestioning, they will become marshals. If they don't pass the "Stalinist school"—the leader liked to talk about himself in the third person—let them blame themselves. Get out of the posts! There are no irreplaceable!

"We need," wrote the Supreme, addressing Zhukov and Konev, "at the beginning of summer to defeat the Rzhev-Vyazemsky grouping, where German troops hold a large bridgehead and have large forces ..." This message became the most important instruction for commanders in the Western and Kalinin fronts. The armies began to prepare for summer battles.

Headquarters directive of July 16, 1942 (Rzhev-Sychevsk operation). It stated: "... At any cost no later than August 2, 1942, take Rzhev. Four armies, as well as two air armies, must be involved in the offensive. The Headquarters demanded: "To clear from the enemy the territories north of the Volga River in the Rzhev region, as well as the territories east of the Vazuza River in the Zubtsova, Karamazino, Pogoreloe Gorodishche regions. Capture the cities of Rzhev and Zubtsov, go out and firmly gain a foothold on the Volga and Vazuza rivers ... "

Implementation of the Directive. On July 30, 1942, 350,000 commanders and soldiers of the Kalinin and Western fronts entered the battle with the enemy. At the end of the offensive, more than one million people were thrown onto the battlefields. The offensive continued until August 23, i.e. 53 days (according to the official version). It actually happened until the beginning of October. For example, the 215th Rifle Division, where I served, entered the battle between 24 and 26 August.

At the cost of colossal losses in only two months of fighting (August-September), in which six armies participated, more than 20 quarters of Rzhev were captured, as well as the cities of Zubtsov, Pogorely Gorodishche and over 100 villages. The Germans were expelled from the left bank of the Volga. But Rzhev and Sychevka still remained in the hands of the enemy. For several months of fighting, 158,819 people were lost.

This is how G.K. Zhukov: "... the active actions of our troops

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in the summer and autumn of 1942 in the Western direction against

German Army Group Center, according to the calculations of the Stavka, were supposed to disorganize the enemy, create the impression that it was here, and not anywhere else, that we were preparing a winter operation ... "The operation did not disorientate the 9th German army. About the winter operation, which really took place, I will say later.

That's "private offensive operations"! They fought over a million fighters. In the region of Pogoreloye Gorodisches a tank battle took place between 7 and 10 August, in which more than 1,500 tanks took part on both sides. It turns out that there are more cars than on the Kursk Bulge, under the famous Prokhorovka. As a result of the summer offensive, the troops broke through the enemy defenses in some places. Rzhev was six kilometers away! Stalin rejoiced! What is six kilometers? The jubilation of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief quickly evaporated. To overcome these six kilometers, it took more than seven months of bloody battles.

On July 14, 1942, the Soviet Information Bureau reported: "The Germans daily lose thousands and thousands of people on the Soviet-German front. And this, regardless of the temporary successes of the German troops, gradually undermines the Nazi war machine and prepares the ground for defeat in this war. Many years later I was told that the text of this "message" had been dictated by Stalin. It was supposed to disavow Berlin's victorious statement about the final defeat of the remnants of the encircled troops west of Rzhev. The Soviet Military Encyclopedia, published in 1960 (18 years later), characterizes the past operation in a completely different light, starting from the events in the south.

"The main goal of the operation (Rzhev-Sychevskaya, 30.07 - 23.08.1942) was to pin down the enemy's forces in the Western direction, to deprive him of the opportunity to transfer formations from the Army Group Center (commander - Field Marshal G. Kluge) to the south, where

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The fascist German troops dealt the main blow in the summer campaign of 1942 and forced the regrouping of part of their strategic reserves to the central sector of the front. The Rzhev-Sychevsk operation was actually deprived of independent significance. Has the assessment of the summer operation, which fell into the category of front-line operations in the official historiography of the Great Patriotic War, changed over the past 45 years after the publication of the Encyclopedia? Unfortunately no.

No matter how the history of the war was rewritten in the postwar period, since the summer of 1942, life has firmly connected us, the soldiers who fought near Rzhev, with Stalingrad. Commanders and commissars constantly called: "Stronger

beat the enemy! Thus, we will better help Stalingrad, where the fate of the country is being decided. Soon the name of the hero city became a symbol of courage and great stamina. The Germans called Rzhev "Northern Stalingrad", the commanders, while fighting, called us "Stalingraders".

The study of the Rzhev-Sychevsk operation was carried out by S.A. Gerasimova, a researcher at the Tver State United Museum. Based on documents, she proved that the official end date of the operation - August 23 - does not correspond to reality (see: "Soviet Military Encyclopedia", etc.). German sources date the end of the summer battle for Rzhev to mid-October.

Only on the 58th day after the start of the operation did the first official report of the Sovinform Bureau about its progress appear. Moreover, in a semi-truthful form: "15 days ago, the troops of the Western and Kalinin fronts in the Rzhev and Gzhatsk-Vyazma directions part of the forces went on the offensive ..." In her study, S.A. th Army, which included the 215th Infantry Division.

Tver State United Museum. Collection of scientific papers. S.A. Gerasimov. "The First Rzhev-Sychevsk Operation of 1942: New Dating". P.105-110.

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During the fighting near Rzhev, the 215th division, with a total strength of 14 thousand people, lost 7-8 thousand, mostly young, flourishing lives. Among them, many cadets of the Tyumen Military Infantry School died. (Collection "Rzhev roads of war". Rzhev, 1942. S. 20-23.)

Headquarters directive of August 29, 1942. It says: "In order to quickly defeat the enemy's Rzhev grouping, capture the city of Rzhev and facilitate command and control of troops, transfer the 29th Army to the disposal of the 30th Army of the Kalinin Front."

Implementation of the Directive. Reading the combat reports of the command of the 30th Army for the end of August - September, we come across approximately the same words: "The 30th Army continues to develop success in capturing Rzhev." But she never mastered Rzhev either in August or September.

Headquarters directive of October 10, 1942. A specific task was set: "To encircle and destroy the 9th German Army. Capture Rzhev, as well as the cities of Sychevka, Bely, Velikiye Luki. The offensive is scheduled for October 23 ... To solve the assigned tasks, the Stavka allocated two fronts (Kalinin and Western) at the disposal of: 1,890 thousand soldiers and commanders, 24,000 guns and mortars, 3,300 tanks and 1,100 aircraft. Strength! army group

"Center" by that time consisted of 72 divisions: 1680 thousand officers and soldiers, 3500 tanks.

Implementation of the Directive. The timing of the offensive was postponed several times: either due to the unpreparedness of the troops for battles, or due to weather conditions. The second Rzhev-Sychevsk operation, codenamed "Mars", began on November 25 and ended on December 20. The directive has not been implemented. Of the cities outlined in it, only Velikiye Luki was taken (in January 1943).

According to the American historian David M. Glantz, it was Marshal Zhukov's biggest defeat. The total losses amounted to 500 thousand people and 800 tanks.

David Glantz. The biggest defeat of Zhukov. The catastrophe of the Red Army in the operation "Mars" in 1942. M., "AST - Astrel", 2007.

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(On August 26, 1942, G.K. Zhukov was appointed Deputy Commander-in-Chief. He handed over the front to I.S. Konev. The Kalinin Front was headed by Lieutenant General M.A. Purkaev.)

Headquarters directive of December 8, 1942. Set for the dacha: "To the Kalinin and Western Fronts, by January 1, 1943, defeat the German grouping in the Rzhev-Sychevka-Lenino area." The directive was signed by both I. Stalin and G. Zhukov.

Implementation of the Directive. The directive has not been implemented. Rzhev and Sychevka were not taken.

Headquarters directive of February 6, 1943. "Commander of the Western Front - V.D. Sokolovsky, Kalininsky - M.A. Purkaev: about conducting a new offensive Rzhev-Vyazemsky operation. It is necessary to encircle and destroy the main forces of Army Group Center and capture Rzhev. To involve 4 armies of the Kalinin Front and 8 armies of the Western Front in the offensive. It was ordered by March 1 - no later than - to take Rzhev.

Implementation of the Directive. Army Group Center was never defeated. On March 2, 1943, at 18:00, the Germans independently left the city. The main forces of the 9th Army managed to break away from the attackers.

In March, Soviet troops, after the Germans left their defensive lines, entered Gzhatsk (March 5), Sychevka (March 8), Vyazma (March 12). Other wordings sounded in the messages of the Sovin Formburo: they didn't enter, but "captured", "knocked out", etc.

Now, by the way, let's acquaint the reader with how the Germans themselves talked about their departure from Rzhev. Let's give a non-

how many pages from the book of Major General Horst Grossman, commander of the 6th Infantry Division".

The report of the 9th Army on the abandonment of Rzhev stated the following: "On the evening of March 2, 1943, the last German rearguards, not ousted by the enemy, had already left

' Grossman Horst. Rzhev is the cornerstone of the Eastern front. Rzhev, 1996. P. 130.

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a long-abandoned city ... "In comparison with this, the Russian military report of March 3, 1943 read: "A few days ago, our troops launched a decisive attack on Rzhev. Today, after long fighting, they have taken the city.

The entire Rzhev battle is evidence of Stalin's mediocrity and cruelty. No luck on the Rzhev bridgehead to the military leaders: G.K. Zhukov, I.S. Konev and D.D. Lelya shenko. In fact, they did not fully comply with any of the Directives of the State. Quite often, individual historians and writers, trying to whitewash the generals, explain the reasons for their defeats by a lack of forces and equipment, refer to the weather conditions, and so on. All of these are fairy tales. For example, the statement of G.K. Zhukov that if he had at his disposal one or two more armies, then it was possible not only to defeat the Rzhev grouping, but also the entire Army Group Center. (The marshal relates these words in his "Memoirs" to the summer Rzhev-Sychevsk operation.) What one or two armies did he need if he had almost a million troops at his disposal?

The troops of the armies of Zhukov and Konev had a huge superiority in manpower and equipment over the enemy. The Germans claim a two or three times superiority of the Russians, and during attacks - 6-8 times. (Summer 1942) According to N. Belov and T. Mikhailova¹, the superiority of the 30th Army over the enemy, for example, in the summer battle of 1942 is estimated: in people 10-20 times, in armored vehicles - 20-30 times.

In Operation Mars, the power of the two fronts was even greater than that of the enemy.

Second dictator

Starting the story about the second dictator, first of all, I will acquaint the reader with a document that became known with

¹ Mikhailova T. Rzhev 1942. "Battle for Hill 200". Tver, 2000. P. 41.

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all recently. He sheds more light on this repulsive person.

Who was Adolf Hitler? Who was the Nazi beast who claimed the lives of 50 million people during World War II? Before leaving the White House, US President Bill Clinton revealed secret documents that give a psychological portrait of the war criminal Adolf Hitler. They are registered under the number 0695930/05/18/2000 and have become evidence of world history. These top secret CIA documents are 68 pages long. They bear the date: December 3, 1942. The "Documents on Hitler" may not be a sensation for historians, but they contain a psychogram of the dictator, which is of public interest. Professor Gui do Knopp comments, supplements and introduces, if necessary, amendments to their text.

Hitler's "good physical endurance" (HWer) can no longer be discussed from 1945 at the latest. Hitler's physical condition until 1939-1940 was relatively stable, so it is not surprising that this time coincided with a period of his success. However, purely subjectively, the hypochondriac was firmly convinced that he would die early. He was afraid that his time was running out. In 1939, on the occasion of his 50th birthday, he said: "I'd rather start a war at fifty than when I'm fifty-five or sixty." On another occasion, he made the following argument: the next generations will not be able to do this. Only he can start a war. He connected the fate of entire nations with his ideas about his own life. In the summer of 1939, his biggest concern was that "at the last moment, some pig will make him an offer to mediate." One of these "pigs" was his closest associate.

Goering (Soepp\$) timidly warned: "We are not going to go for broke." To this, Hitler replied: "In my life I have always gone for broke."

It is significant that, starting from 1942, his condition

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health deteriorated greatly. Already in the summer of 1941, a diagnosis of progressive sclerosis of the coronary vessels of the heart was made. During the war, his personal physician, Dr. Morel (May!) prescribed him a total of 90 different medications, ranging from strong sleeping pills to stimulants, to relieve the state of chronic fatigue. Even 28 times

the personal pills he took daily could not contain the physical destruction of his body. Moreover, he took "Dr. Koesters' anti-bloat pills" for gastrointestinal complaints, as well as other drugs that contained strychnine and various opiate compounds.

Hitler's dreams of living space and the extermination of the Jews were not affected by this - they were from the very beginning the result of an obsessive idea of a psychopath, followed by too many, for too long and too obediently.

Without the permission of the Fuhrer, not a single army, not a single division, but one regiment, not a single battalion, not a single company, not a single soldier had the right to leave their positions. "A German soldier has no right to leave where his foot has set foot!" Hitler hammered this iron rule into the generals and soldiers. In the summer of 1942, the soldiers of the 9th Army took a special oath not to leave their place in the defense. Trying to keep the 9th Army, which was retreating from Moscow, from complete collapse, and recalling the dramatic history of Napoleon's great army, Hitler issued an order in early 1942: "The 9th Army does not take a single step back. Hold the line of defense reached on January 3, 1942! The Fuhrer repeatedly, as commander in chief, demanded to keep Rzhev at all costs. He often called this city, as well as Smolensk, the "Eastern Gate" to Moscow.

Comparing the actions of the two dictators during the war, it is easy to see that their actions were based on some identical motives of behavior: underestimating each other and constantly playing all-in. Of course, due to

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Danish mass. However, there was also a serious difference between them. Stalin understood better than Hitler where to stop and where not to take risks. True, he did not always succeed.

Hitler highly valued the Wehrmacht and often proudly repeated: "I can do whatever I want with my soldier." At the same time, the second dictator, like Stalin, was always indifferent to front line victims. He tried to make his generals behave just as ruthlessly as he did. General Guderian told a curious story about this. When he tried to move Hitler to pity with huge losses in his tank group, in response from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, he heard: "Do you think, General, it was easier for the grenadiers of Frederick the Great to die?" The death of Paulus' 6th Army is a striking example of Hitler's complete indifference to his soldiers and officers, no matter how later he admits his guilt to them. Field Marshal Erich Manstein, who knew Hitler closely, testifies: "... Although Hitler constantly emphasized that he thinks as

soldier, and willingly talked about the fact that he had gained military experience at the front, in fact, the thoughts and feelings of a soldier were far from him ... He was not deeply affected by the fate of the army ... Losses for him were only numbers, indicating a decrease combat capability. As a person, they hardly bothered him seriously.

The losses of the German army in the battles for Rzhev (1942 - 1943), announced in Germany, amounted to 300 to 450 thousand people; Russians lost, according to the same data, about a million. (This was reported by Hans Jürgen Esmeier?, a staff officer of the 26th Infantry Division of the 9th Army.)

Hitler knew that the manpower reserves of the Wehrmacht were limited. Much less than Stalin. But neither Hitler nor the Gnostics from his General Staff, starting a war in the East, fully understood how great the Russians were.

| Manstein E. Lost victories. M.: AST, 1999. S. 340-341. 2 Fedorov E. The truth about military Rzhev. Documents and facts. Rzhev, 1995, p. 217.

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reserves, and most importantly, that Stalin would be able to put under arms about twice as many people as Germany. This was one of the serious miscalculations of the German command in the war with Russia. Hitler did not even know that from the beginning of the war in many areas of the Soviet Union, exposed to the danger of occupation, young people not yet of military age were sent to the East, as a future reserve of the MII army.

During the summer (1942) and winter (1943) campaigns, the command of Army Group Center used up its main combat forces, especially after Operation Mars. After the defeat of the 6th army of Paulus near Stalingrad, the German command finally convinced Hitler of the need to leave the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead. On February 3, 1943, Hitler finally allowed the 9th Army and part of the 4th Panzer Army to withdraw from Rzhev to the line defending Smolensk. In March 1943, in the face of ten Soviet armies, Model withdrew twenty divisions to a new line of defense prepared in advance ...

Until now, military historians are arguing about the numbers of those killed near Rzhev and Vyazma. The total losses in only the four operations I have described amounted to a gigantic figure - 1,324,823 people (according to official figures). This is more than separately in each battle: near Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Kursk, Berlin ..

From the rostrum of the scientific and practical conference (1999), dedicated to the Battle of Rzhev, a more terrible figure of losses was made public - about 2 million. Marshal V.G. Kulikov (near Rzhev he fought as a tanker with the rank of captain)

called the number of killed, captured and wounded - 2.5 million ... Is it true or not? The given figures are enough to terrify ... On Rzhev land in 42 mass graves rest the ashes of soldiers of more than one hundred and forty rifle

' According to the book "Secret Class Removed, Losses of the Armed Forces of the USSR in Wars, Combat Operations and Armed Conflicts", edited by G.F. Krivosheev. M.: Military Publishing, 1993.

? Newspaper "Rzhevskaya Pravda": March 8, 2000

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fifty separate rifle brigades and fifty tank brigades...

Think how many people died near Rzhev, Vyazma, Sychevka, Bely, Polunino, Belkovo! "We have never seen anything like this anywhere and never again," so often later, recalling the battles near Rzhev, the front-line soldiers who miraculously got out of this inhuman battle, in which more than 3 million people participated, said miraculously alive.

The fighting on the Rzhevsky and Vyazemsky lines lasted 502 days. According to some historians, in Russia and in the West, this battle was the most brutal and bloody in the last war. Each piece of native land conquered from the enemy cost about ten thousand human lives here. Such huge losses, obviously, did not know any battle in the history of mankind! This tragedy consisted not only in some unprecedented victims, but also in the fact that offensive battles did not bring success. Failures led to the suppression and distortion of the official historiography about the Rzhev tragedy. Death and unthinkable human suffering were not rewarded with the joy of military success, but caused bitter despair and unbearable resentment. The official historiography is silent about moral wounds.

Thus ended the bloody battle of the two dictators for the Rzhev-Vyazma bridgehead, about which the writer Vasily Kozhanov correctly said: destructive. One from afar listened with pleasure to the Rzhev explosion, the other, six months after the end of the battle, wished to see the crater landscape of the same Rzhev, to feel the charming awe from the destructive power of his beloved god of war - artillery. It is no coincidence that, therefore, on August 5, 1943, with many thousands of escorts, he visited the Rzhev ruins. You better not say! (But - I didn't visit, but watched them through binoculars).

Nevertheless, Stalin considered: the final threat to Moscow

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after the Germans left Rzhev, Vyazma, Gzhatsk did not disappear.

On Russian soil, which was owned by a German soldier, there

there was another protrusion: the Oryol-Kursk Bulge. A new battle is coming!

Brief afterword (based on
the Internet site "Victory-60")

It was called "the key to Moscow" and "the key to Berlin". Soldiers - briefly and harshly - "Rzhev meat grinder." One million three hundred thousand, one and a half million people. Until now, there is no exact number of deaths near Rzhev. Out of 25 thousand citizens, only 250 survived.

Entire armies perished in the battle on the Rzhev bridgehead. In terms of the number of soldiers and the duration of battles, there has never been such a large-scale and bloody operation in the history of the Great Patriotic War. Until now, historians cannot establish the exact number of the dead.

Before the 60th anniversary of the Victory in Rzhev, a diorama "The Battle for Rzhev on September 24, 1942" was opened. Often, still living participants of those events are invited to conduct excursions ... "It was September 24, 1942. The Soviet troops went on the offensive, took several quarters of the city, but the operation was doomed to failure. The ordinary soldier who leads the story then miraculously survived. "Our commanders shouted: "Only forward!" We were cannon fodder, advancing without cover. It hurt a lot. After all, your friends were dying nearby, and I could not help them," recalls the veteran.

In Soviet times, the city of Rzhev never became a Hero City. But historical justice has been partially restored. In 2007 it was awarded the title of "City of Military Glory".

"The first casualty of war is the truth." Moray

Chapter Six

STALIN'S MYTHS
AND "SOLDIER'S TELEGRAPH"

The birth of the "soldier's telegraph"

On July 30, 1942, in the early morning, the air was shattered by cannon thunder. The echo of the cannonade reached us for a long time, although our division was in the second echelon. Assume that the nearest is thirty kilometers from the front line. None of us knew what that thunder meant that day. By evening we had received good news: the front had launched a grand offensive. A few days later moved after Kalininsky and his neighbor - the Western Front.

Optimism in those days seized everyone - from the division commander to the last soldier. Fanfare notes sounded in the words of the commanders and commissars. "This time Rzhev will be taken!" - the front-line press thundered with might and main. But sad rumors soon reached us: the battle turned into a terrible defeat and torrents of blood. Among the soldiers, conversations immediately began: "It is clear that they will demand us too, since they haven't demanded us yet."

The front press, the authorities - commanders and commissars - fell silent, as if nothing had happened anywhere. They whispered: "How is it, it is not clear how many human forces and equipment were moved against the enemy? They laid down apparently invisibly people, but took three dozen villages, more precisely, former villages, and advanced several kilos.

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meters ahead. So we didn't achieve anything." Soldiers' hearts responded with burning pain to the sad news.

How, however, in a brief form, did it become known about the next battle for Rzhev? The so-called "soldier's telegraph" helped to do this. It is not known when he appeared at the front. The main thing is that it did not arise on the orders of the authorities. In 1942, in May, when I got to the Kalinin Front, it already existed. (N.S. Khrushchev in his "Memoirs" calls the "soldier's telegraph" "soldier's radio").

In the Red Army, the "soldier's telegraph" worked to the conscience of the entire Patriotic War. Whoever came up with the truly amazing idea of oral dissemination of current news, who carried it out—the front-line soldiers thought little about it then—there was a war going on.

60 years after the end of the war, reflecting on the past, we can not get around such an unusual phenomenon. How the "soldier's telegraph" arose, or rather, why it arose and how it became for the soldiers, in addition to the will of the authorities, an indispensable source of information - more on that later.

Throughout the war, especially in the first two years, the soldier had little idea of what was happening beyond the trenches. And about what day he will have tomorrow: bad, good or none. It was not given to him to know. It turned out as the English poet Auden figuratively said: "Happy is the hare in

morning, for it is not given to him to know with what thoughts he woke up hunter".

It often happened that the soldier was not up to the news. Then he said: "To hell with them." For example, this happened during an offensive or retreat, a difficult many-kilometer march or encirclement, during hospital stays, and the like. Nevertheless, no matter how you argue, you can't do without news at the front. Without newspapers, they "feed" on rumors; without newspapers, it was boring and difficult. There was no radio. They read themselves or read to us mostly newspapers. Central, mainly Pravda and Krasnaya Zvezda or the front-line press. Each army, as well as the division, had its own newspaper.

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"In the days of the war," wrote Ilya Ehrenburg, "the newspaper is air. People open a newspaper before opening a letter from a close friend. The newspaper now has a letter addressed to you personally. Your fate depends on what is in the newspaper.

Newspapers reached the trenches irregularly, late. Here, in fact, the "soldier's telegraph" helped.

Along with the newspaper, the front-line authorities were guided by the commissar's "living word". Despite the huge number of political staff, it often did not work. It contained an even greater share of untruth than in the press, it lacked sincerity and warmth, and without them the "living word" faded, did not reach the soldiers' hearts. The words of the "soldier's telegraph" turned out to be closer to the soldier's environment, if only because they did not contain

LIE.

Often the commissars, during conversations with the soldiers, lied to them "in the dark." In this case, they often acted on instructions from above. "This should be done to raise the spirit of the fighters. The soldier, having lost faith in success, withdraws into himself, feels deceived, which does not strengthen his will in the fight against the enemy.

What were they telling people? "Yes, there are weak successes on our front, many losses, but on other fronts the Red Army is successfully advancing and crushing the Germans." Deception knocked down apathy among the soldiers for a while, instilled hope, inspired. Sometimes the soldiers protested against the untruth. For example, when they were assured of the strength and power of Soviet aviation, of the advantages of our pilots and aircraft. "How so?" the soldiers judged. "What an advantage, where is it, if not every day, then the sky is dark from the Germans, like a furnace from the inside." Until the end of 1943, according to my observations, German aviation dominated the sky.

Similar trickery, according to the stories of the prisoners,

\Ortenbergd. June-December 1941. Chronicle story. M.: Sov. writer. 1989. S. 16.

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German propaganda was also heard. One such striking example is the first bombing of Moscow.

Here is the report transmitted by the Soviet Information Bureau:

"Yesterday, July 22, 1941, at 10:10 pm, 200 German planes tried to make a mass raid on Moscow, but it failed. The air defense around the capital did not let the bulk of the enemy planes through. The loners broke through. Fires broke out in several buildings in the city, which were soon extinguished.

The same event was reported by German radio as follows: "The fires in Moscow raged all night, and in the morning the Muscovites saw the ruins of the Kremlin, along which some people wandered in search of something." In another radio broadcast, German radio listeners heard: "The central power plant has been completely destroyed. The movement of urban transport has stopped, the population is fleeing from the destroyed, burning city. What was not, would not be. I bear witness!...

Once, in a circle of like-minded people, Joseph Goebbels dropped a phrase about a lie. Like, the more ridiculous and monstrous it is, the easier it is to believe in it. Then he spun a lot more. Often quite the opposite in meaning. However, in the USSR (and now in Russia), it was precisely this statement of his that for some reason acquired simply phenomenal fame. Maybe because the Soviet propaganda lied and lied absurdly and monstrously.

In the front line, German pilots dropped thousands of leaflets with approximately the same tales. Soldiers and officers, especially Muscovites, were naturally worried. The commissars had to refute the false German propaganda.

How many similar facts can be cited from both sides - a lot. "Soldier's Telegraph" in such cases did not sit idly by.

However, in wars, as I now know, they lied from time immemorial. Let me digress a little. Those who managed to watch the film "Alexander Nevsky" may have remembered how famously the Russian soldiers dealt with on Lake Peipsi

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almost 700 years ago (1242) with the Livonian knights. Hundreds of them were put on the ice.

After the war, listening to a lecture by a historian, I learned this. In the ancient Novgorod chronicle it is written that 400 knights of ray were killed in that fateful battle for Russia, and 50 were captured. In fact, only 20 knights died and 6 were captured. Note that the chronicler obviously did not know about this: the total number of the Livonian Order did not exceed 200 knights ...

Back to the war days...

The belligerents, seeking to increase the morale of the soldiers, used various psychological methods in their propaganda practice: from the most elevated to the lowest and dirtiest. By manipulating the consciousness and feelings of people, they used such tried and tested methods of propaganda as love for the motherland, patriotism, and the fulfillment of duty. They did not shy away from the maximum distortion of truthful information, concealed or underestimated their own losses and overestimated the losses of the enemy. The commissars, like the press, tried to inform the fighters mainly of victorious facts. They gladly cited facts about the defeats of the enemy. I remember with what satisfaction they told us. that on May 30, 1942, a thousand British planes bombed the city of Cologne. "Now the Germans themselves will experience the suffering that they bring to other peoples," said the commissar. One of the Red Army men, right, asked:

— How are the children?

Why pity them? the commissar replied dispassionately. - The Nazis do not spare our children and women.

Soviet propaganda preached sacrifice with might and main. The Red Army soldiers were called upon to destroy the enemy at the cost of their lives. Hence the feats-myths of 28 Panfilov heroes led by political instructor Vasily Klochkov, five seas of Sevastopol soldiers led by political instructor Nikolai Filchenkov and private Alexander Matrosov.

All three examples had nothing to do with reality. There were not 28 Panfilovites at the Dubosekovo junction, but

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140. About 28 of them remained alive after the battle, and about 110 people died and were captured. They knocked out 5-7 tanks, not 20, as they wrote in the newspapers, and did not in the least delay the movement of the enemy. The truth came to light in 1948, when one of the 28 heroes was tried for subsequent service in the German police. At first, they wanted to sue the commander and commissar for allowing a breakthrough in the area of Klochkov's company, but then, when there was a hype in the press around the battle near Dubosekovo, they changed their minds about judging them.

There could not have been a feat of the five sailors of the political instructor

Filchenkov, allegedly on November 7, 1941, with bundles of grenades thrown under German tanks and destroyed during the battle either ten or fifteen armored monsters. This legend is refuted by one fact. The German-Romanian 11th Army advancing on Sevastopol in November 1941 did not have a single tank.

Let's look at the beginning of the war. For example, the report of the Soviet Information Bureau on the results of the first battles read: "Cut off by our troops from their bases and infantry, being under continuous fire from our aircraft, the enemy's motorized mechanized units found themselves in an exceptionally difficult situation. In 7 days of fighting, they lost 2,500 tanks and about 1,500 aircraft, more than 30,000 prisoners. The offensive spirit of the German army has been undermined."

In other words, two-thirds of the armored vehicles and almost half of the aircraft were allegedly knocked out of the German invasion forces in just a week. In fact, by the end of June 1941, as is known, the enemy had already occupied Minsk, reached the Western Dvina, and continued to move deep into the territory of the USSR at the same rapid pace. Who and why did the Soviet leadership try to deceive with primitive lies? After all, the obvious still had to be recognized soon. However, the effect of the "released sparrow", which you "cannot catch", of course, remained.

Here are a few episodes from the Soviet press during the first war years. Pravda published two essays by the writer Boris Polevoy. In the first, entitled "Over the Dead Rzhev", he vividly described the "heroic"

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shield of the city. "When on an October night," the author writes, "gangs of Nazi savages burst into Rzhev, the city resisted for a long time, desperately ... Partisans defended every street ..." Everything written by the author is nonsense. The Germans entered Rzhev freely, no one resisted them. It happened during the day, not at night, on October 14, 1941. There were no partisans anywhere near. The name of the German commandant of the city of Schrenke was invented, such a person did not exist. In the second essay, the author relishes the transformation of the city under a hail of Soviet bombs and shells into a cemetery - this atrocity was committed on the orders of Stalin.

When, after the war, Boris Polevoy arrived in Rzhev and met with the inhabitants of the city, he repented before them: "They say, brothers, there was such a time." This story had its due. Army newspaper "Forward, against the enemy!" in the issue of September 11, 1942 (the article "Accordion player from Rzhev") repeated one to one the "legends" of Boris Polevoy. The explanation is the same - the desire to kindle the flame of hatred for the enemy in the soldiers' hearts.

It is impossible not to mention the story of the famous tank

battle near Prokhorovka, where the tankers of P.A. Rotmistrova supposedly won a glorious victory over superior enemy forces! The reader can judge the degree of this "superiority" if he compares the strength of the 5th Guards Tank Army - 850 tanks and self-propelled guns - and against the 2nd SS Panzer Corps of General Hausser, which stood up to it - 273 tanks and assault guns, including eight captured "thirty-four." And as to which side the victory was, I think, one can draw an unmistakable conclusion by comparing the losses of the parties at Prokhorovka. The German Corps irretrievably lost 5 tanks, and another 54 tanks and assault guns were damaged. The army of the Rotmistrov irretrievably lost 334 tanks and self-propelled guns, and about 400 more were damaged. Immediately after the battle, Stalin had the idea to deal harshly with Rotmistrov for the mediocre ruined army, but then the Supreme decided that for propaganda purposes it was better to consider defeat

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victory near Prokhorovka, and did not bring the commander to justice. At that time we did not know all the details of this mythical victory of the Soviet tank forces. But the "soldier telegrapher" knew, but was silent.

From the first days of the war, Soviet artists also inflated their hatred for the enemy with might and main. In 1986, a unique exhibition called "War Graphics" was held in Moscow. Its organizers unearthed the most interesting printed documents of the wartime era from private collections of collectors: propaganda posters, popular prints, and a series of caricature publications. Here are two lugs. On one of them, Ivan Smolyarchuk, a former Chapayevite, a former Siberian hunter, lures German tanks into wolf pits dug by him. On another lubok, foreman Pyotr Nikodimov, with an ax in his hands, crawled to a German tank, which did not allow the Soviet infantry to move forward with machine-gun fire, climbed on it and bent the barrel of the machine gun with an ax blow. It seems that the plot of the popular print reminds of the heroic deed of Alexander Matrosov: this is how "victory" was born. If you want, believe, if you don't want, don't believe. Thank God, these tales did not fall into the hands of front-line soldiers. And in the rear, many people believed them. Or, more accurately, they wanted to believe.

Let's go back to the facts. In May 1942, near Kharkov, several Soviet armies were surrounded and ceased to exist at once (the 6th, 9th, and "General Bobkin's group"). The Berlin report reported the capture of 240 thousand people. Sovinformburo has traditionally refuted the halo. However, the most interesting is not even that. And the fact that the official Russian science of the past and now with manic obstinacy continues to challenge the data of the former enemy.

He continues, although N.S. Khrushchev himself, who was one of the main culprits of that defeat, confirmed them in his memoirs. He, along with Marshal S.K. Timoshenko

just drove the troops into a trap. It is clear that in vain no one will blame themselves for such sins. But Dim gave credit to Nikita Sergeevich, who found the courage to write the truth. Let's take a look at his memoirs:

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to this I rode, flew and went to Stalin, as they say, surrendering to the will of Fate. What would become of me, I did not know. We met. Stalin greeted me... he says to me:

- The Germans announced that they had captured so many thousands of our soldiers. Are they lying?

I answer:

- No, Comrade Stalin, they are not lying. This figure, if announced by the Germans, is quite accurate. We had about the same number of troops there, even a little more. It must be assumed that they were partially killed, and the other part of them, called the Germans, was really taken prisoner.

Skillful use of even relatively simple weapons requires a professional and thoughtful approach. And such a subtle and double-edged tool as information requires doubly intellectual maintenance. But the domestic system of nominating leading cadres in 1941-1945 turned out to be traditionally ineffective. And not only on the propaganda front. Therefore, the victory had to be achieved in the usual Russian style - without measure overspending huge material resources and incurring completely unjustified gigantic losses in people.

Lies especially dominated in the information about the constant change in the direction of battles in 1941 and 1942, about cities surrendered by the Red Army. Here the "soldier's telegraph" often helped to clarify the situation. Not always, but often and aptly!

All the main Soviet information agencies: TASS, radio, newspapers, the Soviet Information Bureau tried to portray the most insignificant victories in rainbow colors and hid even the smallest defeats from the army and the people. Loss statistics about people and equipment turned into a complete juggling of numbers. In war, as a rule, each side underestimates its own losses and exaggerates those of the enemy, but the lies of the Soviet mass media have taken on a truly fantastic character. The history of wars has never known such a falsification.

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A few examples. In the leading article of the newspaper "Kras-

naya Star" for July 1941, there are the following lines: "The truth is that Hitler's "blitzkrieg" is collapsing... The truth is that already in the first 8 days the fascist army has suffered major losses..."

On July 3, 1941, I.V. Stalin's famous speech on the radio took place. The leader informed the people and the whole world that "... that the best divisions of the enemy and the best parts of his aviation have already been defeated and have already found their grave on the battlefields ..."

On the same day, Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the German Army, wrote in his Combat Diary: "During the first ten days of the war in the East, the total losses of the German army amounted to 41,087 people (1.64% of the personnel of the troops). Including, 542 officers and 8,362 non-commissioned officers and privates died ..."

How to deal with statistics, how to create myths out of it, the Supreme One set an example. For example, the figures given by him in his speech on November 6, 1941, taken from the ceiling, are far from reality. The dictator says that Germany is already drying up, "hunger and impoverishment reign in it. She bleeds... A few more months, another six months, maybe a year - Hitler's Germany must burst under the weight of its crimes. And Germany, as we know, did not burst until the final capitulation.

How often the dictator wished for reality, tried to support the people's spirit with "sweet lies". The most criminal lie of the dictator is the concealment of the losses of the Red Army and the civilian population in the Great Patriotic War. By naming seven million dead, Stalin froze the truth about the losses of the USSR for more than seven years, until his death.

This untouchable myth deprived the country's historians of the right to study such an important problem, becoming a mystery for foreign historiography. Moreover, the explanation, as always, is the same: "Why worry the people?"

Over time, the Soviet press became so lied that sometimes

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she herself could not distinguish where the truth is, where the half-truth is, and where the lie is. Censorship—both party and military—was rampant and constantly held editors, writers, journalists, and military historians by the throat. Try even a single politically awkward phrase to step on the information field - and you're done! David Iosifovich Ortenberg, editor-in-chief of Krasnaya Zvezda, wrote in detail about these editorial torments. In his books Krasnaya Zvezda in 1941 and Krasnaya Zvezda in 1942, he sadly tells how hard it was for him and his staff to publish each issue of the newspaper.

And nowadays, in the era of the Internet, it is not easy to find complete and accurate information about the failures of the Red Army in the Great Patriotic War, for example, about the battles near Rzhev, Smolensk, Vyazma, Kharkov, Kiev, in the Baltic states, in the Crimea, about the battle for Leningrad. During the war years, the "soldier's telegraph" clarified something about these and many other dramatic events for us.

Who will undertake, say, the next experiment? Who will try to calculate, according to the military reports of the Sovin Formburo, published for all 1418 days of the Great Patriotic War, the loss of personnel of the German army on the Eastern Front? I guarantee that a place on the pages of the Guinness Book of Records is guaranteed for him! It is no coincidence, probably, that is why wartime newspapers are now classified in Russia.

According to the Soviet General Staff and the Soviet Information Bureau, from the beginning of the war to 1 March 1942, the losses of the Wehrmacht amounted to 6.5 million people. This is about the same as Germany lost on all fronts of World War II. In fact, from the beginning of the war until March 1, 1942, the Germans lost six times less on the Eastern Front - 1,005.6 thousand people! Of particular note is the information for one year [1942 — the year of the largest losses of the Red Army in the Great Patriotic War. According to research

| Bezhanov V. 1942 - Academic year. Minsk: Harvest, 2000, pp. 23-24.

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3,258,216 persons, according to the "Secrecy stamp removed", they amounted to 3,258,216 people. Dmitry Volkogonov estimates them one and a half times higher. Some modern historians consider his figures too low. According to German statistics, the German army lost 519,000 men in 1942, that is, approximately 6.5 times less...

° Losses in the last war are still not exactly known, and to this day various data are given. They are not specified, checked. Until now, the huge number of missing people, the "missing" people, has not been found out. For example, every year search engines in only two regions of Russia - Smolensk and Tver - find about five thousand new remains of Soviet soldiers and bury them. According to the latest data, about five million soldiers and officers are buried on Russian soil in unmarked graves.

When, for example, at the front, a commissar, in a conversation with the Red Army men, cited figures of German losses, relying on the speeches and orders of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, or referred to the domestic press, could they trust him? The soldier knew his statistics. Real naya. He met with her every front-line day.

Walking further and further west from Moscow, the soldier saw how ten of our corpses and one of a German usually lie on the battlefields. As the Soviet troops moved forward, this ratio gradually changed. So almost until the end of the war! For it is known that Soviet generals fought not by skill, but by numbers. By the way, the search engines, having discovered wartime burials, confirm this ratio.

According to my observations and calculations, Soviet daily military reports usually inflated German losses by two or three times, or even more. Here the "soldier's telegraph" often tried to correct them.

| Bezhanov V. 1942 - Academic year. Minsk: Harvest, 2000, p. 608.

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Front print

What is the use of an army seal for a soldier? Glorification of the Supreme, Stalin's "science to win." The glorification of the Communist Party, Soviet patriotism and heroism, the exposure of the atrocities of the Nazi invaders, their "new order", which, in the opinion of the commissars, incited hatred for the enemy - this is perhaps the main content of the front-line newspapers. Materials were usually submitted under headings printed in bold type: "Stay like ...!", "Take an example ...!", "Let's do our duty!", "Follow the experience!". The latter was a generalization of advanced front-line experience. No criticism, no analysis of the fighting. Some victorious reports! Soldiers, looking through the next issue of the army newspaper, joked: "Grah, bang, hurrah! Destroyed the enemy!"

In the 220th Rifle Division, where I fought from October 1942 to July 1944, the newspaper *Za Rodinu* was published. You can't fit much into four lanes. Nevertheless, journalists managed to squeeze a maximum of various information into this small volume. The newspaper responded vividly to regimental life, tried to cover the exploits of commanders, commissars, and ordinary Red Army soldiers - of course, primarily communists and Komsomol members. She willingly provided pages for front-line creativity, posted poems, feuilletons, drawings, especially on the theme of Soviet patriotism. Of course, neither the commander nor the soldier could ever find in it an answer to such, for example, questions that most often worried them: why can't we "get" to Rzhev in any way, why all offensives end in defeats, why losses are so great? These questions were often discussed in the soldiers' conversations. They were also asked to the commissars, but even after their answers, many could not understand what was going on at the front?

The minds of the editors of the front press until the summer of 1944, of course, on instructions from above, were occupied by the theme of the second front. We did not know what was going on upstairs, what diplomatic battles were unfolding between Stalin and

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'and allies about the opening of a second front. We often learned about the second front also from the Germans, of course, with a certain amount of lies. True, in 1942, Stalin, in his festive October speech, tried to explain the reasons for the defeats of the Red Army by the absence of a second front. In 1943, the Germans wrote in scattered leaflets about the fields where the front passed, about the differences between Stalin and Churchill. At the beginning of the 44th, they were convinced that the Allies had deceived us and there would be no second front. They wrote directly: "Stalin was deceived by the allies of KI."

How did the commanders and we, the soldiers, react to the fact that the opening of the second front was being delayed? Gradually, a misunderstanding of what was happening and even some distrust of the allies was born. A simple and understandable thought drilled into the soul of everyone: postponing the opening of a second front is prolonging the war, and this means new losses. The Red Army bleeds, and they, the Allies, get off with promises, stewed meat and army boots... The front press and the commissars constantly stirred up such moods as much as they could. Here is an example from the army press. There is a conversation between two fighters. One asks: "How to open a second front faster?" Another replies: "Perhaps American boots will help us get to him as soon as possible."

Which of the front-line soldiers knew then about the huge scale of military supplies from the allies of the USSR. Without Lend-Lease, the Red Army was unlikely to be able to fight for a long time.

But now American tanks, planes, the famous "Studebakers", "jeeps" appeared at the forefront. The soldiers cheered up. The day of the landing of the allied troops in Normandy - June 6, 1944 - became a holiday for the front-line soldiers. I will cite a few jokes that went around among the soldiers in wartime and reflected the new cheerful moods at that time. "Studebaker" ("Student", as the soldiers called him) - a reliable front-line vehicle that radically changed the movement of Soviet infantry and artillery, was lovingly called the "Guy with the breeze." Co.

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When the American Airacobra planes appeared in the sky, the soldiers clenched their fists tightly and, raising their heads up, shouted joyfully: "Give the Germans more poison, guys!" One of the soldiers, looking at the American aircraft

you are in the sky, said that our best pilots flew them. It was true. For example, from 1942 until the end of the war, the famous Soviet ace Alexander Pokryshkin flew on the Aero Cobra fighter.

The Red Army is losing its face

Gradually, changes began in the Red Army that no one had thought about before, and at first their meaning was not clear. The words "Red Army" and "fighter" were replaced by the words "soldier and" private "; simultaneously appeared "officer", "officers"; continuity began to be established with the pre-revolutionary army and the military history of Russia.

Increasingly, Suvorov, Kutuzov, Brusilov, Ushakov, Nakhimov and other commanders and naval commanders were mentioned more and more often. Gradually, the names "Red Army", "Red Fleet", introduced during the years of the revolution and the Civil War, began to disappear, giving way to the "Soviet Army", "Soviet Navy". And absolutely stunning was the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the introduction of shoulder straps in the Armed Forces of the country. In the winter of 1943, epaulets adorned the uniforms of Soviet soldiers. These changes were significant, as if a new period of war began with them. True, some soldiers said then: "What difference does it make - I want it this way, I want that way: a commander or an officer?" Someone rejoiced: "Maybe, guys, now the officers will swear less and command better than the commanders before?"

In those years, one could hear not only from soldiers, but also from officers, that life after the war would change for the better, and soldiers often connected this with the hope that collective farms would be abolished. Despite strict military censorship of letters,

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information reached the front - how life was in the countryside. And if, as Soviet propaganda asserts, without the collective farms we would not have withstood the onslaught of the enemy, then with the same confidence we can assume that no other land management could have robbed the peasants in such a way as it was done through the collective farms. During the war years, the village became a typical Nekrasov village, with its poverty and the arbitrariness of the local authorities, which could hardly be justified by the hardships of wartime.

We were dressed in a new uniform with shoulder straps. We looked at each other in amazement: epaulettes on our shoulders ... This had only been seen before in the theater or on the screen in the cinema. When you got out quickly and felt proud.

The special merit of the "soldier's telegraph" was to inform the soldiers about the character, abilities and professional

sional qualities of their commanders. What is a commander like: a "stick man", that is, one who beats his subordinates with a stick, a scuffler, a foul-mouthed man, a shooter? Or both, and another, and the third? "Capercaillie" or father commander? "Breadcrumbs" or the kindest soul? A daring man or a "coward hare"? It was important to know what the commander was capable of. Does he move his brains? How does he treat his superiors: according to the principle "What would you like?", "Yes, it will be done!" or "I'll think about it."

Commanders themselves often listened to these characteristics. There were legends about the stick of the commander of the Kalinin Front, I.S. Konev. Its strength was tested by many commanders. The commander of the 4th Ukrainian Front, Eremenko, was recognized as the largest muzzle fighter of the Red Army. The general often justified his bad actions and deeds with the permission of the Supreme

leg.

Under Stalin, the price of a human life fell as low as never before in Russia. In other states that participated in the Second World War, heroes were mythologized who destroyed many enemy Soldiers, tanks, planes, ships, but by no means at the cost of their own lives. The only exception was the Japanese "Kamikaze". In this regard, Stalin and his generals

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fully shared the samurai tradition, according to which the main thing for a warrior is to die heroically in battle, and not to save his life in order to continue to destroy the enemies of the GOV.

If the tankers managed to escape on the battlefield or jump out of a broken and burning tank and get to "their own" intact under enemy fire, then the Smershevites accused them of a crime. "How so: they abandoned the tank" Or, for example, when artillery fire was opened without the permission of the authorities, such a situation was considered and qualified as a crime, although this was necessary.

In the Soviet system, people were cogs, and it seemed that there were so many of them that you could easily sacrifice a million or two. Eremenko's words about Zhukov: "It should be said that Zhukov's operational art is 5-6 times superior in strength, otherwise he will not get down to business, he does not know how to fight not in numbers and builds his career on blood", are applicable to almost every Soviet commander, starting with the Supreme.

Where did the "soldier's telegraph" get the information from? By what paths, unknown to anyone, did they get to the mass of soldiers? I will tell you about one such case, in which I was directly involved.

Suddenly, the regiment where I served was alerted, and after a couple of hours the entire division moved on an accelerated march

to the nearest station. We walked all night, not knowing where and why we were being led? What if the Nazi beast again jumped on Moscow? Then someone recalled the commissar's words: "Mortal danger hangs over the country: the German is rushing to the Volga!" The "soldier's telegraph" put an end to various rumors: "The division is urgently sent to Stalingrad!"

During the night we walked about thirty kilometers. Without explaining anything, the column was stopped and sent to the forest. A short rest slightly revived after a difficult transition. After that, they turned back after the departed equipment and rear units. "Soldier's Telegraph" immediately tapped but

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the news: "Stalin found out about us and ordered not to remove a single soldier from under Rzhev!". So I did not get to Stalingrad. It is known that in 1942 about fifty divisions were sent to Stalingrad, including several from the Western Front. For some reason, our division, which was still being formed, was not touched.

°. Later, about three or four months later, when we were in the former German trenches on the left bank of the Volga (November-December 1942 and January-February 43), the "soldier's telegraph" brought two new messages. First, about the victory at Stalingrad. Now we informed the German soldiers about this event - about the major defeat of the German army. At the same time, it became known about a new offensive on our front near Rzhev. It lasted from November 25 to December 20, 1942 and ended in a terrible defeat. Neither the central nor the front press uttered a word about him.

Soldiers' Telegraph was highly valued by the soldiers. The commissars and special officers tried to block all possible channels of unofficial information received by us! They tried to instill in the soldiers their harmfulness and deceit. Whether declaring them enemy propaganda. They were convinced that the "soldier's telegraph" was distracting front-line soldiers from combat missions, bringing confusion into the minds of people. Nothing helped: all their efforts were in vain! We could no longer imagine life on the front line without a "soldier's telegraph".

I don't remember a single case during the war years at the military infantry school, where I studied for 4 months, and then at the front, that any of the commanders or commissars would tell us soldiers about the Germans: about their professional level, about their front-line life, about their weapons. It is known that our enemy was a highly trained army equipped with the latest technology. From a young age, German soldiers constantly dealt with technology - radio, telephone, electrical appliances ... Our infantry consisted of 70%, if not more, of peasants in soldier's overcoats. Many of them saw the railroad for the first time when they were taken to the front.

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The "soldier's telegraph" played a significant role in the fight against enemy propaganda. Information is a living thing. It can exist for a long time and roam the world. And it is often taken for the truth. When the German army invaded the Soviet Union, the soldiers and officers of the Wehrmacht saw the poverty of Russian life, the terrible conditions of reality. One of the first propaganda works of the Nazis was the 60-page pamphlet *The Soviet Union Through the Eyes of German Soldiers*. Letters from the East. The letters were carefully selected and were designed to strengthen the National Socialist consciousness in the army, emphasizing the importance of the German army's offensive against Soviet Russia, in order to liberate the people from Bolshevism. If only it were so!

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Victory in Paris, the book "I saw it" was published. It consists of carefully selected letters from veterans, which they sent to the *Izvestia* newspaper, of course, with the beginning of perestroika in the country, approximately 40 years later. Writer Svetlana Aleksievich comments on all 300 selected letters. "These are not heroes, but ordinary people, or, as they say about themselves, the front-line proletariat. Their stories are simple and unsophisticated... And that makes them even more frightening... All letters are from soldiers, whether they are written by a private or a colonel. A line from one of them: "In a war, soldiers and generals win too, if they are good soldiers ..."

Here is one of these letters - B. Ivantsov. Mineral water:

"... There was enough of everything, including the funny. Once, in a combat report, I wrote that the battery destroyed ten people, dispersed them around the platoon. The chief of staff of the regiment calls: "Not enough! Write - destroyed to a platoon, scattering but up to a company ... Then the postscripts returned to normal. Experience comes with blood, with senseless losses. We have just taken combat positions in the direction of the neighboring state farm. To select an observation post, the division commander and sappers left on two "zises". Suddenly the commander of the division calls me up and orders me to open fire on the state farm:

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"There are Germans - intelligence has just reported." My head is spinning, my hands are shaking. And he is waving a gun in front of my nose. Well, I added 600 meters to the measured distance, counting on the flight. But the map turned out to be inaccurate. The fire covered the farm. I ran with tears in my eyes, screaming heart-rendingly. The assistant commander of the regiment, in some kind of wild insanity, wildly cursed the colonel. They say this guy finished badly."

By the way, did the "soldier's telegraph" lie? I made a mistake in a hurry - it happened. On the other hand, unlike the press, it never caused any resentment or disappointment, but, on the contrary, brightened up front-line life.

Often the "soldier's telegraph" easily and simply carried jokes, anecdotes, funny stories through the trenches. From laughter, and sometimes laughter, the authorities often somehow felt uncomfortable. No matter how hard the enemies of the "soldier's telegraph" tried, they could not ruin him.

An impressive episode in the history of the "soldier telegraph" on Rzhev land is the news of the German withdrawal from Rzhev. It is known that the front and army authorities often "cowardly", with an eye on the Supreme, hesitated to enter the city, fearing new complications, although they received many reports from intelligence officers about the departure of the Germans.

Memories have been preserved, for example, of the commander of one of the regiments of the 220th division, Lieutenant Colonel Skovorodkin, as well as the writer Elena Rzhevskaya, and the intelligence officers themselves, confirming what was said. As a result, the Germans calmly left the city and managed to break away from our units. Quite a disgraceful fact! On January 2, 1942, German units fled from Rzhev. They were absent from the city for three days. Army and divisional intelligence missed the sudden disappearance of the enemy. Although the "soldier's telegraph" conveyed this unusual news to individual commanders, perhaps it was too late.

If Zhukov and Konev had moved troops then and taken Rzhev, how many human lives would have been saved and how the operational situation on the entire front would have changed ...

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"There is no greater shamelessness than you to make a statement for the truth, the falsity of which is known to be false."

kabuk

Chapter Seven

SMALL LIAR

"Cabinet Commander"

On March 2, 1943, the German units left Rzhev after fifteen months of defense. The next day, the troops of the Kalinin and Western fronts entered the city.

As soon as Winston Churchill found out about this event, he immediately sent an open letter to Stalin: "Please accept my warmest congratulations on the occasion of the liberation of Rzhev. From our conversation in August, I know what great importance you attach to the release of this clause. (March 4, 1943)

Stalin replied: "Although we have recently had some successes at the front, it is precisely now that the Soviet troops and the Soviet command are required to exert exceptional effort and special vigilance in relation to probable new actions by the enemy. In this regard, I have to go to the troops more often than usual, to certain sectors of our front ... "

One can imagine how, having received a Stalinist reply to his congratulatory letter, the British Prime Minister had fun. He was well aware that Stalin did not go to any "troops." Little liar!

Stalin's message to Roosevelt dated August 8, 1943 is also interesting. "Only now," the Supreme Commander writes in it, "on my return from the front, I can answer your last message of July 16th. I have no doubt that you take into account our military situation and will understand what happened

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hold with the answer. I have to visit personally more often on various sectors of the front and subordinate to the interests of the front all the rest".

Another historical document: Roosevelt and Churchill, in a joint message to I.V. Stalin dated August 19, 1943, adequately assessed the personal leadership of the Supreme at the front. "We fully understand," they wrote, "the weighty reasons that make you stay close to the fronts where your personal presence contributed so much to victory."

Now the Supreme Commander could be completely satisfied: who can reproach him for being an "armchair strategist" who knows the front from newsreels, from the stories of the generals of the General Staff or the army command.

What kind of trip to the front did the Supreme Commander refer to in his messages to Roosevelt and Churchill?

For the sake of history

Knowing that until 1944 Hitler had been constantly visiting the Eastern Front, Stalin decided, out of decency, as Supreme Commander-in-Chief and, as Dmitry Volkogonov suggests, "for the sake of history" to go to the front anyway. So

Supreme named his trip. In fact, he did not go to the front, but towards the front - it's calmer that way. The trip took place 158 days after the liberation of Rzhev, | - August 5, 1943. Stalin chose two points for the trip: Gzhatsk and Rzhev. He decided to personally see the liberated cities - they gave him so much trouble and emotional unrest.

The choice was determined by other motives. It was then that Churchill reminded him of. Finally (and this, obviously, the most important event for him), by his visit to Rzhev, Stalin sought to emphasize his own role in the liberation of the Rzhev-Vyazma ledge! First, the Verkhovny visited Gzhatsk, where he met with the commander of the Western Front V.D. Sokolovsky and a member of the Military

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Council N.A. Bulganin, and then near Rzhev he met with the new commander of the Kalinin Front A.I. Eremenko.

A lot of apologetics, funny and sad stories have been written about this trip. The bridge over the Volga, blown up on Hitler's orders during the withdrawal of German units, was restored by Soviet sappers long ago, the city and all roads to it were completely cleared of mines. But the Supreme Commander chose to stop at the village of Khoroshevo, five kilometers from Rzhev.

The whole trip of Comrade Stalin, as always, was accompanied by small and large tricks and secrets. In this case, they are just fantastic! Wow, Lavrenty Pavlovich became aware only a day before Stalin's trip. A whole army blocked all roads and highways for a hundred kilometers around - from Moscow to Gzhatsk and Rzhev. At one of the airfields near Moscow, a squadron of fighters with ace pilots was on duty in combat readiness.

The train consisted of two semi-broken freight cars, which were driven by an old steam locomotive, several platforms with firewood were attached to them (for disguise). Now these cars are exhibited as a historical relic in the Stalinist homeland - in the city of Gori. The Supreme Commander himself, with his retinue and bodyguards, was in a saloon car camouflaged as the main train.

The house in Khoroshevo also became famous for the fact that, while in it, the Supreme Commander instructed to prepare an order for the first artillery salute in honor of the liberation of Orel and Belgorod.

He did not go to the troops to meet with the officers and soldiers on the front line. After spending the night in the village of Khoroshevo, he returned to Moscow in cars with Beria under heavy guard.

Here is another document. He appeared on the eve of the Tehran Conference in 1943. This is a letter from Molotov dated November 22, 1943 addressed to

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nogo in US affairs in the USSR. In it, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs states:

"At present, Marshal Stalin is at the front, but I have a message from him that he will arrive at the appointed place no later than December 28-29. I ask you to report this to Mr. President..." Lie like that!

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Stalin's death (2003) in Moscow, the Eksmo-Algorithm publishing house published Staliniana in ten books. An interesting detail that cannot be ignored: the book "Commander Stalin" in this series. The authors of the book, Boris Solovyov and Vladimir Sukhodyev, write: "During the difficult days of the defense of Moscow, Stalin went to the front to get acquainted with the state of affairs on the spot." Allegedly, his bodyguard A.T. Rybin, in his Notes: Stalin at the Front, says: "... In 1941-1942, Stalin went to the front lines - to the Mozhaik, Zvenigorodsky, Solnechnogorsk defensive lines. In the Volokolamsk direction, he went to the hospital, to the 16th army of Rokossovsky, where he examined the operation of the BM-13 ("Katyusha") rocket launchers in kind, visited the 316th division of I.V. Panfilov. Three days after the parade on November 7, 1941 on Red Square, Stalin went to the Volokolamsk highway to one of the divisions that had arrived from Siberia and examined its combat readiness. In 1942, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Rybin continues to say, traveled across the Lama River to the airfield where aircraft were tested. On August 2-3, 1943, Stalin arrived on the Western Front to General Sokolovsky and a member of the Military Council N. Bulganin, on August 4-5 he was on the Kalinin Front with General A. Eremenko ... "

Sometimes, on this occasion, other authors exclaim that he traveled little, or even worse - they say, "I was afraid." Either they pretend, or maliciously miss, that the Supreme Commander-in-Chief could not go to the front more often - "it was impossible to carry out general leadership of the war. And that's the main thing."

Why did Hitler travel to the fronts from 1941 to 1944?

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It is known that during the more than three years of the war, Hitler visited Uman, Zaporozhye, Smolensk, Vitebsk, visited Borisov, Poltava, Belaya Tserkov, Nikopol. Near Vinnitsa and Belaya Tserkov were the field Headquarters of the Fuhrer. IN

During the first years of the war in the East, Hitler visited individual armies, corps, divisions and even regiments, hospitals, and test sites.

The details given by the bodyguard A. T. Rybin are unknown. I did not find them in any sources for 1941. If Stalin's trips had really taken place then, one can imagine how the Soviet press would have painted them later. They are not reported in their memoirs by Vasilevsky, Shtemenko, Zhukov, Rokossovsky. And here is the exact assessment of Rybinsk's writings:

"In the 1960s, interviews and pamphlets by the late A.T. Rybin, who briefly served in Stalin's guard at the beginning of the 1930s, were widely circulated. Practically everything related to the description of Stalin's life "nearby" was compiled by him from the words of officers from Stalin's bodyguards, but Rybin's own comments and conclusions are often striking in their ignorance, lack of understanding that his writings are easily used by interested hostile forces against Stalin and socialism. And if Rybin's interviews in the journal "Sociological Research", in the newspapers "Soviet Russia", "Patriot", and even "Moskovsky Komsomolets" were very popular

nie..."

Here is what D. Volkogonov writes in his book "I. V. Stalin. Triumph and tragedy": "After an unsuccessful trip to the front in October (1941), when Stalin reached only the Volokolamsk highway, he looked at the flashes of the front approaching Moscow, 19-15 kilometers from the place where his cavalcade had reached, Stalin more on the front line did not get out.

| Semenova N.G. , Dorodko Yu. V. Many-sided anti-Stalinism and nothing but the truth. M.: 2006. P.10.

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I spoke about the so-called trip "to the front" in 1943.

Naturally, the question arises: did the authors of the book "Commander Stalin" really not read Volkogonov, whose books are based on declassified documents, and not conjectures? There is no point in commenting on Rybin's "Notes". Wra Ne...

Let us also recall the "Memoirs" of Comrade Stalin's closest associate, Anastas Mikoyan ... He knew that Stalin had never been to the front, and he said this in them !!

During the war and in the first post-war years, Soviet artists "created" a whole gallery of paintings on the theme "Stalin at the front." About ten paintings. Spread-

their reproductions in the post-war years adorned the garrison Houses of Officers, barracks, headquarters offices
high authorities.

A large artistic canvas has been preserved. The artist depicted on it Stalin standing on a high hill, looking through binoculars at the ruins of the former city, destroyed on his personal order during the fighting. Next to him are A.I. Eremenko and L.P. Beria. Lavrenty Pavlovich at one time had to be painted over. Now, on the "historical" house in the village of Khoroshevo, five kilometers from Rzhev, where Iosif Vissarionovich stayed during his "trip to the front", a memorial plaque has been erected and often individual Rzhevites bring flowers to it ...

About the failed trip to America

The American president three times during the war years invited Stalin to meet with him on any territory. Stalin thanked Roosevelt, but every time he politely refused to meet with him, referring to the difficult situation at the fronts and the need to be present in Moscow or in

'Mikoyan A.I. It was. Reflections on the past. M.: Vagrius, 1999. S. 415.

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army. Roosevelt invited Stalin to visit America, promising to send him the most armor-piercing ship. Stalin, in his response letters, expressed doubts about a possible trip: would the American people give him a warm welcome?

The American president, inviting the "Chief Communist of the Planet", understood that indeed many conservative citizens would be against the arrival of the red leader on the blessed American soil. But Roosevelt assured Stalin that he would do everything possible to be received cordially by the Americans, first of all as the main ally of the United States in the fight against Nazi Germany.

How the American president's naivete extended to "Uncle Joe" - as he called Stalin - follows from the following example. Roosevelt, as you know, did not allow his assistants to criticize this "personality", did not allow them to express their critical remarks.

Roosevelt did not have to be disappointed in "Uncle Joe", who responded with ungratefulness to America for helping the huge Soviet Russia in the brutal struggle against the Nazi army. The great man did not live to see the collapse of the Allied Coalition, in which he believed so much, to the "cold

war, started by Stalin for his own political purposes.

Some Russian historians reproach Stalin for not taking advantage of Roosevelt's warm attitude towards him, not meeting with him, which would have allowed driving a wedge in US-British relations and thereby isolating Churchill from solving many pressing global political problems.

Invited Stalin to visit the United States and President Truman.

"I told him," Truman wrote in his diary, "that I would send the battleship Missouri after him if he agreed. He said he wanted to be in the US in the form of an employee in the war, but it would be more difficult. He said that he would be misunderstood in the USA, so I would be misunderstood in Russia. I said that each of us can help make things right.

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at home and that I will try my best to make it at home. He smiled at me extremely cordially and said that he would try no less at home in Russia. Stalin formally accepted the invitation, but, returning to Moscow after the Potsdam Conference, did not confirm his consent.

In March 1946, after Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, delivered in the presence of Truman, the American president repeated the earlier invitation. He invited Stalin to speak at Fulton, but received an unflattering refusal.

The Soviet press did not utter a single word about all this, which I spoke about ... But rather deftly and smoothly falsified Churchill's speech, and at the same time smeared Truman with mud.

According to some historians, Stalin's trip to America would undoubtedly have become a political sensation, would have played a significant role in Soviet-American relations, in raising the authority of the USSR and the Generalissimo himself.

Those historians who think so are mistaken. For the monster of the Kremlin never thought of sincere relations with the allies. The main thing for him was to defeat Hitler with their help. Stalin sought to deceive the allies by any means, to get them at least to benefit in his own imperial ambitions. This is evidenced by all three international conferences held during the Second World War and after it: Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam. The Yalta Conference is especially noteworthy. On the days of the 60th anniversary of its holding, US President George W. Bush, as well as some American historians and the media, many decisions taken in Yalta were recognized as a serious mistake by President Ruz-

velta.

Moscow actually violated almost everything agreed

th 'Zlobin N. Truman. Magazine "Continent". 2001. No. 10. P.13—

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sti in Yalta. Roosevelt and Churchill did not stipulate conditions that would ensure their implementation. They took Uncle Joe's word for it. Indicative in this regard was the meeting between Harry Truman and VM Molotov during his visit to the United States for the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco. On the way, he visited the American President in Washington. Here is what Nikolai Zlobin said about this meeting: "... Gruman told the Soviet guest that the United States was ready to fulfill all the agreements concluded, and in a sharp form expressed his bewilderment at the fact that the USSR was violating them one by one. The President of the United States spoke with particular harshness about the Soviet policy in Poland and towards the UN. The US would do what was necessary to create the UN, the president said, and if the USSR didn't want to do it, then "they could go to hell." Molotov was shocked. "No one in my life has ever spoken to me like that," he said. "Keep the treaties and they won't talk to you like that," Truman protested.

A little later in his diary, Truman writes: "I have no faith in any totalitarian states, be it Russia, Germany, Spain, Argentina or Japan. They are all based on the false premise that lies are just, and that the old, debunked Jesuit formula that the end justifies the means, the rights, and that the power of government must be upheld. I do not agree and do not believe that this formula will help mankind in realizing its hopes.

"Honest communism," as stated in the Acts of the Apostles, will work. But the "Russian Godless Perverted System" will not work. What an accurate characterization!

At the Yalta Conference, one example can trace the vile, personal trace of the dictator, his constant cunning. From those ancient times, let us recall one half-forgotten but striking episode... In May 1944, when the Red Army expelled the Germans from the

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the Tatar population, as well as the restoration of the Artek pioneer camp. After which the famous operation took place

Soviet intelligence called "Zlatoust".

ANOTHER INVITATION

In the closing days of the conference, Roosevelt and Churchill received a warm invitation from the Artek pioneers to visit their camp. Let's go: the wife of the British Prime Minister Clementine Churchill with the British Ambassador to Moscow Kerr, as well as the American Ambassador to Moscow Averell Harriman. They were solemnly greeted by pioneers and officers of the Soviet intelligence disguised as counselors.

Artek residents received generous gifts. Clementine Churchill brought them 15 tents for 40 people and handed them a check for £5,000. Pioneers who came to Artek lived in these tents until 1960, when a grandiose seaside building was erected in their place. Harriman gave the kids a check for \$10,000.

The records of the long-term director of Artek, Vladimir Tikhonovich Chistov, have been preserved. Here is what he wrote about this operation, which went down in the history of Soviet intelligence as one of its outstanding achievements. "We did not suspect then," writes Chistov, "that the Artek pioneers would become participants in the reconnaissance operation..."

Events unfolded as follows: the guests were shown a slightly restored camp, invited to a concert where the children sang the anthem of the United States of America in unison. When the concert ended, the Artek people solemnly brought into the hall a bald eagle made of precious woods (mahogany and ebony, black alder, Persian parrotia, elephant palm, etc.) and handed it to the American ambassador.

"What a beauty! exclaimed Harriman gleefully. "But what am I going to do with her?" Stalin's personal interpreter, Berezhkov, who was sent with Harriman to Artek, immediately gave the ambassador advice:

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- Hang in your office. The English will die
from envy.

The "Eagle" with a microphone built into it hung in the embassy office of the American ambassador for 8 years. During this time, four ambassadors were replaced, but the "bug" cleverly made by skillful hands supplied secret information to the Kremlin every day. The "bug" was powered by microwave radiation from a special device installed in the house next door to the embassy.

The operation was personally directed by "Uncle Joe". A secret microphone was accidentally discovered, and the Americans for a long time

time about this unpleasant story for them was silent.

In 1960, when an American plane was shot down (0-2, the Soviet government accused the United States of espionage activities, persistently demanded that it be condemned at the UN. In response, at a regular meeting of the General Assembly, the American representative demonstrated the "eagle" in front of the UN delegates -a spy.It has since been kept in the CIA museum at Langley...

Don't forget to say one more thing. The Chekists inquisitively studied the character of Averell Harriman, his tastes, interests, and hobbies. So the eagle, made of the best wood, was made and presented to the American ambassador not by chance...

Conclusion

Let us acquaint the reader with Churchill's telegram to I.V. Stalin, sent by him from London after the end of the Yalta Conference:

"Received February 18, 1945.

MESSAGE FROM Mr CHURCHILL
MARSHAL STALIN

On behalf of His Majesty's Government, I would like to express my warm gratitude to you for the hospitality and friendly welcome extended to the British delegation on the Crimean

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conferences. We were deeply impressed by the great skill of organization and improvisation, thanks to which the conference proceeded in such a pleasant and inviting atmosphere, and we all keep the happiest memories of it. To this I must add a personal expression of my gratitude and appreciation. No previous meeting has shown with such clarity the results that can be achieved when the heads of the three governments meet each other with the firm determination to face difficulties and overcome them. You yourself said that cooperation would be more difficult if there were no unifying ties of struggle against a common enemy. I am determined, as well as the President and you, as I am sure, not to allow, after the victory, the weakening of such firmly established ties of friendship and cooperation. I pray to grant you a long life so that you can direct the destinies of your country, which under your leadership has shown all its greatness, and I send you my best wishes and sincere blessings.

gratitude.
February 17, 1945".

Stalin politely thanked the British premier. And oh, how he laughed, how he tenderly twirled his mustache, remembering About "Chrysostom"... So the saying is true: "He who laughs last laughs."

"The winner deserves generosity." Kozma
Prutkov

Chapter Eight

HOW 'UNCLE JOE' OUTPUT THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT AND THE ENGLISH PRIME MINISTER'

This event took place at the famous Yalta Conference in the Crimea from 4 to 11 February 1945. There was very little time left before the victory of the Allies over Nazi Germany. The "Big Three", at the initiative of Roosevelt, decided to get together to discuss and adopt documents on the post-war structure of Europe, and above all Germany.

On the eve of the upcoming meeting, Soviet intelligence provided Stalin with a copy of the telegram sent by Churchill to Roosevelt. In it, the British Prime Minister considered the question of how best to "beat" Marshal Stalin at the upcoming conference. In fact, the opposite happened in the negotiations. Stalin was not

'... Roosevelt, who was serving breakfast, said that he and in secret telegrams always called Stalin 'Uncle Joe'. I suggested that he tell Stalin about this in a confidential conversation, but he joked about it in front of everyone. A tense situation has been created. Stalin was offended: "When can I leave this table?" he asked indignantly. Beeris saved the day with a clever remark: "After all," he said, "you use the term 'Uncle Sam', so why does 'Uncle Joe' sound so offensive?" After that, the marshal calmed down, and Molotov later assured me that he understood the joke. He already knew that many abroad called him "Uncle Joe", and realized that the nickname was given to him in a friendly way, as a sign of sympathy.

Winston Churchill. The Second World War. Rostov-on-D.: Feniks, 1997. S. 529.

only a fantastically hospitable host, but he also managed better than his guests to prepare for negotiations and deftly, at the highest stage level, "outplay" his guests. And he succeeded in this despite the fact that before the summer in Yalta, the American President and the British Prime Minister met secretly in Malta. Here they tried to discuss the possibility of bringing their points of view closer to Moscow.

. At the conference, Roosevelt was mainly interested in three problems: the United Nations, the entry of the Soviet Union into the war with Japan, and the post-military organization of Europe. On all these points, Roosevelt received the full support of Stalin.

At Yalta, Roosevelt hoped to strengthen friendly relations with Stalin. In his foreign policy activities, the American president assigned the primary role to the so-called "personal diplomacy". He believed in the idea - to influence the Soviet ruler in the post-war period. As they said then, "tame" it, soften the regime in Russia, achieve greater tolerance for the Kremlin and the church, abandon many ideological dogmas that frighten humanity, and carry out economic reforms for the benefit of the country. Reasoning in this way, Roosevelt believed that he had already achieved the first concrete results along this path. In Soviet Russia, the patriarchate was reintroduced, in 1942 the institute of commissars was abolished in the army, the Comintern was dissolved in 1943, Soviet propaganda abandoned many ridiculous Bolshevik dogmas and rather used national-patriotic slogans.

Long ago, even without Roosevelt, Stalin realized that only the revival of the national-patriotic spirit of the people would help him defeat Hitler. I had to deal with the unification of the Slavic peoples, as well as the creation of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, and the organization of a Muslim association headed by a mufti.

Harry Hopkins, the closest friend and assistant of Roosevelt and his first person in "personal diplomacy", somehow

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that Stalin would have been pleasantly surprised to learn how far the American president was willing to go to meet the interests of the Soviet Union. Harry Hopkins believed that Stalin could be dealt with within the framework of the anti-fascist Union. In turn, Stalin considered Harry Hopkins "the first American who came to his liking." This man had a huge impact on both Roosevelt and Stalin, trying to bring their positions closer.

Roosevelt believed that, despite the ideological differences between the United States and Soviet Russia, it was possible to negotiate with "Uncle Joe". Since 1942, he has been striving

he was fond of personal meetings with Stalin, but he avoided them under various pretexts. Historians believe that this was a serious political miscalculation of the Soviet leader.

In Yalta, Roosevelt promised Stalin after the end of the war to provide the Soviet Union with a profitable loan of \$ 4.5 billion to restore the country destroyed by the war - a colossal amount at that time. In turn, Stalin offered the Americans to organize large concessions on favorable commercial terms. That did not happen. Roosevelt died 55 days after the Yalta Conference. In a telegram to Stalin, Harry Hopkins then wrote: "Russia has lost its best friend in America."

On the first day of mourning, Stalin received the American ambassador to Moscow, Averell Harriman, in the Kremlin. During the conversation, Stalin told him: "Roosevelt is dead, but his work must continue." Curiously, at the end of the conversation, Stalin advised Harriman "to perform an autopsy on Roosevelt's body... Haven't his opponents removed the president, poisoned him?">.

In his book The Cold War, Jeremy Isaacs and

' Biographical index: Harry Lloyd Hopkins, chronos SO Kot, Bp: //m\m\.\Vgopo.shYu/! yurtga /o orK!\$\$. Wit]

2? Pechatkov V. Stalin, Roosevelt, Truman. USSR and USA in the 1940s Documentary essays. M.: Terra - Book Club, 2000.

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Taylor Downing write: "The Yalta Conference represented the high point of Allied cooperation during the war." But at the same time they add: "Cracks appeared in the Great Union in Yalta. He held on only because of the common goal of defeating Hitler. Was it really so? I don't think Roosevelt thought so at the time.

Much has been written about Yalta. Perhaps more so than about Tegrin and Potsdam.` Obviously, because the Yalta Conference adopted fateful decisions that determined the development of the universe for the next 50 years. The Conference endorsed the basic principles for the operation of the United Nations.

It seems to me that Churchill wrote about Yalta best and most fully. He paid great attention to it in his historical memoir 'The Second World War', awarded with the Nobel Prize.

Let's mention one more author "about Yalta", which few people know about. But getting to know him is not only useful, but also

funny. These are the "Notes" of the culinary specialist William Pokhlebkin, who restored the details of "that grandiose Stalinist action that accompanied the conference."

Here is an excerpt from an excellent article by Alexander Gennes about this book: "... Palace housing for 350 people was prepared for the conference, two airfields, two autonomous power plants were built, water supply, sewerage, laundries and a bomb shelter with a reinforced concrete rolling of 5 meters thick.

But most importantly, a truly ritual action took place at the dinner table. The description of this culinary spectacle is striking in its titanic scope. Pokhlebkin writes: "Stalin played a decisive role in these purely gastronomic spheres, for he carefully followed the

| Cordell Hur. The US Secretary of State in the Roosevelt administration went down in history as the founder and organizer of the United Nations, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. (Alexander Zhuravlev. "Will Hillary Become a Good Secretary of State?". BBC. Kizzap.com. November 24, 2008.)

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in order to organize the table in such a way that he could stun the other side with the assortment, quality, unprecedented content of the Soviet menu and, at the end of the battle, "suppress the enemy" with culinary means.

In just 18 days, everything necessary was arranged for holding banquets unprecedented since the time of Louis. This is stated in Beria's memorandum to Stalin: "Stocks of livestock, game, gastronomic, grocery, fruit, confectionery and drinks were created on the spot, and local fishing for fresh fish was organized. A special bakery has been equipped, three self-contained kitchens equipped with refrigeration units have been created at the locations of three delegations - in the Livadia, Yusupov and Vorontsov palaces, 3250 cubic meters of dry firewood have been brought from Russia for bakers and kitchens.

Under the word "living creatures", Pokhlebkin deciphers, he meant "lambs, calves, piglets, well-fed bulls, turkeys, geese, chickens, ducks, and also rabbits."

Serving required enormous efforts: "It took 3,000 knives, 3,000 spoons and 3,000 forks, as well as 10,000 plates of different sizes, 4,000 saucers and cups, 6,000 piles, glasses and glasses. All this had to be obtained in a country in which 35 million men were mobilized but the army, which had already lost 10-12 million people by that time, in a country where for 5 years not a single cutlery had been produced, and in all these years a million ny such fragile fragile objects were destroyed in the military and evacuation turmoil.

For the contribution to the work of the Yalta Conference, the results of which (according to Pokhlebkin) were largely determined by the incessant series of banquets, the authorities awarded an entire army of servants. In total, 1021 people were awarded orders and medals. Moreover, 294 awards were awarded directly to the cook, waiters and other personnel, that is, almost a third.

Reading these descriptions, detailed to the point of tediousness, one cannot get rid of the impression of barbaric, blasphemous luxury. It seems that Stalin intimidated the allies who became

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perniks, not a royal treat, but a readiness for sacrifice. "Grub" and "sacrifice" are words of the same root and common origin.

Many politicians and journalists in the West have been criticizing the Yalta agreements in the press for a long time. Moreover, it is emphasized that Roosevelt came to the conference already mortally ill and was unable to deal with important documents, and some of them he did not even read, trusting completely his assistants.

And who are the judges?

Criticism of the creators of Yalta is mainly focused on four issues. First, they believe that Stalin was "paid" too high a price for Russia's entry into the war with Japan. For the participation of the Red Army in the war with Japan, Stalin demanded a guarantee of independence for Mongolia, the return of the USSR of the southern part of Sakhalin and Port Arthur, taken by Japan from Russia after its defeat in 1904, the internationalization of the port of Dairen, the Kuril Islands, the recognition of the western Soviet borders on June 22, 1941, the occupation of Manchuria.

An interesting fact: the above seemed insufficient to Stalin, and he tried to seize the continental part of Japan by force (the island of Hokkaido), but General MacArthur, the commander-in-chief of the American troops in the Pacific Ocean, did not let the Red Army go there, and also rejected all sorts of Russian claims to influence the occupation regime in Japan. It is known that no peace treaty has been concluded between Russia and Japan so far. The reason is Russia's unwillingness to return the Kuril Islands to Japan. Stalin, in exchange for his demands, promised to go to war with Japan three months after the end of hostilities in Europe.

Alexander Gennes. Feast in Time of Plague. Zvezda Magazine.

2000. No. 10. Vir: //tazattes.guzz.gi/7ue24a/2003/10/vep!5.Vitll.

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The atomic bomb was not yet ready. The Japanese army numbered 6 million soldiers and stubbornly resisted.

General MacArthur promised Roosevelt that he would force Japan to capitulate with aerial bombardments. At that time, American strategic aviation was already a huge power. However, European experience suggested that without ground troops, the war could not be won.

Truman, as you know, tried to refuse agreement with Russia about its entry into the war with Japan, but he did not succeed with this idea.

The second issue, perhaps the most troubling one, is the implementation of the Declaration on the Political Independence of the Eastern European Countries. And above all, the concern of the Western allies about the future of Poland. The subsequent events after Yalta showed that the document adopted by the "Big Three" for Stalin turned out to be a piece of paper. Stalin's subsequent aggressive actions caused increasing anxiety among the Western allies. "I remember those times when V.M. Molotov said: "We had to consolidate what was won." And Stalin, in his words, was determined not to miss this historical chance and not to be "cheated", as the West had often done with Russia in previous wars.

Historians sometimes express the idea that "Yalta actually betrayed the Eastern European countries", gave them to the power of the Kremlin. And this power, as we know, continued for more than 40 years. Question: could it have been avoided that Stalin did not comply with the Yalta agreements? The Allies tried to use economic leverage against the USSR: in September 1945, they stopped lend-lease assistance, but it turned out clumsily and unsuccessfully, they denied Moscow

1 Collection of documents "Tehran - Yalta - Potsdam". M. From "International Relations", 1970. Compiled by: P.P.Sokolov, B.L.Tsybulevsky.

2? Pechatnov V. Stalin - Roosevelt - Truman. USSR and USA in the 1940s Documentary essays. M.: Terra - "Book Club", 2006. S. 342-343.

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requesting a loan, etc. However, Stalin established a pro-Soviet regime in one country after another. An attempt to stop Stalin's aggressive intentions could only be

one way is to go to war with the Soviet Union. Such a course of action could not be seriously considered in the political climate that prevailed at the end of the Second World War.

How could one trust Stalin in such a serious and principled issue affecting the destinies of millions of people? historians ask. Just one example.

Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons with a speech on the Yalta Conference, said: "Marshal Stalin and the Soviet Union gave the most solemn assurances that the sovereign independence of Poland would be preserved. Great Britain and the USA have now joined this decision."

It is known that the British Prime Minister repeatedly repeated: "Everything that Stalin promised me, he always fulfilled." It turns out that Churchill in this case, again, relied on the Stalinist word.

Let us cite one episode from the history of diplomacy as a commentary on the words of the British Prime Minister. It was 1942. The results of World War II were still far from certain. The Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance between Great Britain and the USSR has not yet been concluded. Eden in Moscow, and then Churchill and Eden in London, already upon Molotov's arrival there, refused to sign the treaty because of the categorical Soviet demand to recognize its state borders on June 22, 1941. Molotov and the Soviet ambassador Maisky anxiously informed Stalin that, without a named article, the treaty becomes a piece of paper. What was their surprise when Stalin in response gave them instructions to urgently sign the treaty. "And the borders," said Stalin, "we will strive for power."

Churchill W. World War II, Rostov-n / D.: "Phoenix". 1997. S. 530-531.

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In fact, Stalin did just that after Yalta. Already two weeks later, at the end of February 1945, on the orders of Stalin and with the help of Soviet tanks, the Romanian government was overthrown. It was headed by Petr Groza, brought from Moscow. The young King Mihai, awarded the Order of Victory by Moscow, was soon forced to leave Romania and flee to Switzerland.

In December, when I got leave and went to Moscow, I spent three days in Bucharest. By this time, the whole country was being rebuilt in the Soviet fashion, and the king was gone.

Chekists from Moscow brought the legendary anti-fascist hero Georgy Dimitrov to Bulgaria and put him in

head of the country. In Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, Stalin allowed free democratic elections to be held. But their results for Stalin were deplorable. And then he did not take risks. Ultimately, the communists seized power in all these countries. I have personal impressions of the so-called "elections" in Hungary, which I will share with the reader.

In the autumn of 1945, when I was serving in Hungary, one day the division commander took me with him to a meeting in Budapest. There they gathered the commanders of all the units located in the country, and for this reason. At that time, the so-called Control Commission was located in the capital. It included representatives of the four victorious countries: the USSR, the USA, Great Britain and France. The Soviet Union was represented by K.E. Voroshilov. The first postwar parliamentary elections were held. It is clear that we helped the communists as much as we could. The notorious Matias Rakosi spoke at the meeting. He said such that the generals almost fell into a trance. And he said the following: "Don't interfere with us. We can handle it ourselves. Better put things in order in the troops." As examples, the generals heard such things that the light could dim before their eyes. But he didn't die.

"The Control Commission is inundated with complaints," said K.E. Voroshilov, "of Hungarian citizens against the Soviet Army. They are willingly used by our opponents and

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jose print. I ask you to urgently draw the appropriate conclusions. If you don't make them, we will! On the way from Budapest to the division, I asked the general: "What does Voroshilov's word 'we' mean?" He laughed and simply replied: "The old man is joking... He can't do shit to us."

On the eve of election day, the communists staged a manifesto with placards and marched through the streets of the city where our unit was stationed. I saw how pots of slop were thrown at the demonstrators from the roofs of houses, and young people standing on the sidewalks booed the demonstrators. There were elections. The Communists received 26% of the votes of the country's population. The party of small farmers won. In those days I got a vacation and went to Moscow to my parents. When I got to my native land, I read in the central newspaper Pravda that the Communists had won in Hungary.

led by Matthias Rakosi. Like this!

The third issue was related to reparations. The Western allies were extremely surprised to learn that Stalin was refusing gold. Pretending to be a very modest, in the Western sense, gentleman, Stalin put forward his reparations plan, according to which each side collects reparations from the part of Germany that it occupies. The Allies agreed. But in fact it turned out that "Dya-

Dyushka Joe "outplayed" his partners. Gavriil Popov told in detail how the robbery of Germany and its citizens actually took place.

Finally, the most delicate question. It concerned displaced persons and Russian prisoners of war. And on this point Roosevelt and Churchill "lost" to Stalin.

This decision was made on the last day of the conference, February 11, 1945, at the Livadia Palace, where all plenary sessions usually took place. And where the Big Three met for the last time. At it, the Anglo-Soviet draft "Agreement on Russian

prisoners of war."

| PopovG War and Truth. Publishing house [Lfepu Me Wokk, 2005.

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The discussion of the "Agreement" is perhaps the only case in Yalta that required certain unrest and efforts from Stalin. Let us pay attention to Stalin's words, to the style of his speech, to his unusual behavior, when for the first time in his life he did not order, did not force, did not demand, but literally begged, but somewhere, rather, begged. Ah, what did the great actor ask for? He hopes that the Allies will return to the USSR in the shortest possible time the former Soviet citizens driven by the invaders for slave labor in Germany, as well as Russian prisoners of war. That all these unfortunate people will find firm protection of their rights from them, that they will immediately be separated from German prisoners of war, that the Allies will take care of them, treat them with respect, these are Soviet citizens! They will be adequately fed and provided with the necessary medical care.

The American President entrusted one of his aides, General Dean, to sign the "Agreement" on behalf of the United States. Roosevelt himself did not read the document on which the future lives of millions of people depended.

At first glance, the text of the draft "Agreement", agreed in advance by Russian generals and British diplomats in Moscow before Yalta, did not raise any objections. True, several minor Amendments had to be introduced, more of a stylistic nature.

Only one question arose: who should be considered "with Soviet citizens"? They agreed that all former citizens of the USSR on September 17, 1939 should be considered "Soviet citizens".

It turned out, and Stalin admitted this, that the number of Russian prisoners of war does not include residents of the Baltic states, Western Ukraine, Moldova, Northern Bukovina, as well as people of the first emigration from the USSR after the revolution, Citizens

war, especially from among the White Guard soldiers who served in Hitler's army.

Stalin understood that some part of the displaced persons and Russian prisoners of war would not want to return to the Soviet Union ... Therefore, he was extremely interested in

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imposing strict conditions guaranteeing their return. He did everything possible to ensure that there were as few witnesses of the "Soviet paradise" left in the West.

The Western allies did not understand how people who are in captivity can not strive to return to their homeland? Stalin also took this circumstance into account and obtained from the Yalta authorities a harsh wording on mandatory repatriation, which was to be carried out regardless of the wishes of the displaced persons and Russian prisoners of war, which actually did not correspond to the democratic principles of Great Britain and the United States, as well as international law.

It seemed to the American President and the British Prime Minister that this question was the simplest of all the problems they discussed at Yalta. In practice, everything turned out to be much more complicated than they expected. The repatriation was overgrown with a whole heap of contradictions of a political, legal and moral nature, and caused a storm of protests from public figures, churches, lawyers, and diplomats.

The Allies were forced to use the army and military police to force people to return to their homeland, against their will. And this, in turn, confused all the cards: the number of repatriates included a lot of Russian people - emigrants who left Russia after the October Revolution. In total, the Western allies handed over to Moscow about two million Russian prisoners of war.

What guided the Western allies, going to meet Stalin, making such responsible decisions?

First, they were worried about the fate of their own prisoners of war who had fallen from the Nazi camps into the hands of the Red Army. There were 232,000 both Americans and British in the camps occupied by the Red Army.

Secondly, they could not ignore the fact that Stalin promised to go to war with Japan.

' Dembitsky N. P. The fate of the prisoners.

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Thirdly, at the end of the war and after its end, the problem of betrayal became extremely acute. First of all, this concept applied to Russian prisoners of war who served in the German army as volunteers, to the so-called "Khivi". In addition to them, the so-called combat Russian units, Cossacks, as well as the Vlasov army were in the Allied camps. They all surrendered to the Allies in German uniforms.

Well, tell me, for example, how to evaluate a driver from among the "Hiwi" who carries shells to the front line? Another example: a Russian volunteer helps German technicians to strengthen bombs in German planes.

Very often, the Americans and the British, not to mention the Red Army, considered all Russian prisoners of war to be Vlasov, which is not true. In total, the Vlasov army consisted of approximately 120 thousand people, that is, about 5% of the total number of Russian prisoners of war.

By the end of the war, the number of Russian volunteers in the divisions of the Wehrmacht was approximately 20% of the total. Russian volunteers also served in the SS troops - up to about 5% of the army divisions.

Another amazing example. More than 50,000 Russian volunteers served in Paulus' 6th Army near Stalingrad. In the encirclement, they fought fanatically, and, apparently, after capturing the entire army, the survivors were shot.

Talking about the combat units of Russian volunteers, the following should be said.

For the entire period of the war, according to the German historian I. Hoffmann, the German army had 90 battalions, of which 26 Turkestan (20.5 thousand people), 15 Azerbaijani (36.6 thousand), 3 Georgian (19 thousand), 12 Armenian (7 thousand), 9 North Caucasian (15 thousand), 8 battalions of Crimean Tatars (10 thousand), 7 battalions of the Volga Tatars and other peoples of the Volga and Urals (12.5 thousand people). In 1942, the Kalmyk cavalry corps (5 thousand people) was formed in the zone of operations of Army Group A.

Along with combat units, the Wehrmacht had

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, 11 personnel battalions that served as the base for the formation of marching reinforcements, as well as 15 reserve, construction and transport battalions and 202 separate companies - [11 Turkestan, 30 Georgian, 22 Armenian, 21 Azerbaijani, 15 Tatar and 3 North Caucasian. The 162nd (Turkic) infantry division was partially equipped with these units. Thus, the total number of military formations from the Turkic and Caucasian

Russian nationalities reached about 1[50 thousand people. Most of them were Soviet prisoners of war.

The American and British command did not view the Russian prisoners of war through rose-colored glasses, although at the beginning of their captivity they promised not to hand them over to the Soviet authorities. In turn, the Russian prisoners of war trusted the Western allies, who in their promises referred to the honor of the British crown or the democratic institutions of the United States.

In World War II, after the Allies landed in France, the Germans threw Russian combat units against them. Russian volunteers fought in Rommel's Afrika Korps, leaving dark memories for the Italian people when they fought against the Italian partisans. They also fought against Tito's army in Yugoslavia.

The question is often asked in the West: did Roosevelt and Churchill understand what awaited Russian prisoners of war and displaced persons handed over to Russia who did not want to return to their homeland? Basically, I think they understood!!

The Allies tried to "push off" responsibility for the Russians who found themselves in their zones of occupation, not to think about their difficulties, housing, food, etc. In their own countries, after the end of the war, their veterans had to return, for whom they were obliged in the first place take care.

As a result of the indifferent attitude of the Western allies and world public opinion at that time, repatriation turned into so-called "extraditions",

| Kuznetsov B. To please Stalin. New York, 1993.

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usually applied to criminals. Reigned often at will, shed streams of blood.

In the West, many books have been written about shameful "extraditions", hundreds of personal testimonies have been collected. In the Soviet Union, this topic was closed for many years.

According to the latest data, during the Great Patriotic War, 4 million 59 thousand Soviet soldiers and commanders were captured, two million of them died, 1 million 833 thousand returned to their homeland, the rest managed to avoid repatriation, replenishing the Russian diaspora in the West ' .

Already after the Finnish campaign, almost all those who returned from captivity were convicted in a judicial or non-judicial manner. This approach existed invariably throughout the years of the Great Patriotic War and decades after it. Did the soldier escape from captivity, left the encirclement, or was found on

liberated territory, he received invariably his 10 years in the camps. All "former soldiers of the Red Army," as these people were called in official documents, as "subjected to the influence of German ideology," underwent a "political check" in prison. Those who in captivity occupied the positions of senior barracks, doctors, orderlies, translators and cooks were listed as "German intelligence agencies." Those who were liberated by the Allied forces were suspected of "connections with British and American intelligence." These people did not enjoy the benefits of war veterans for the rest of their lives. There were no legal documents that would allow an objective review of their fate. Only on January 24, 1995, the Decree appeared, signed by the President of Russia, "On the restoration of the legal rights of Russian citizens - former Soviet prisoners of war and civilians repatriated to

| According to the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation in 2005. According to the historian G.F. Krivosheev, during the Great Patriotic War, 3,396,400 servicemen went missing and were taken prisoner. Of these, 1,836,000 military personnel returned, did not return (died or emigrated) - | 783,000. However, these figures are disputed and in doubt.

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period of the Great Patriotic War and in the postwar period".

Until now, there are no exact statistics on "former Soviet citizens": how many of them were brought in prison cars and steamship holds to Soviet Russia, what was their fate? It became especially tragic for the Vlasovites. Here is one paragraph from an interview with Vladi Mir Bashev:

"With the Russians who fell into the hands of the allies, do it very meanly. They were promised that they would not be handed over to the Soviets, but according to the Yalta Agreement, everyone who was on | | September 1939 was a citizen of the USSR, subject to return. And the one who was in military uniform on June 22, all the more had to be returned to the hands of SMER Sha. And they had a very sad fate. Most of the officers were immediately shot. Privates were sent to camps. The British and Americans, especially the British, betrayed them.

I will tell about the sad fate of Russian prisoners of war in the next chapter.

`Vladimir Bashev's four-volume work "Vlasov" Frankfurt am Main has been completed. Between Sot.

"God can't change the past, historians can."

Samuel Butler

Chapter Nine

MEETING ON THE ELBE

The echo of the Elbe is the name of the monument erected in the German town of Torgau in honor of the meeting on April 25, 1945 between Russians and Americans.

During the last days of the war in spring, a photograph circulated around the world, capturing the first moments of that extraordinary historical meeting. American lieutenant Bill Robertson and Soviet lieutenant Alexander Silvashin, standing on the supports of the bridge over the Elbe destroyed by the Germans only yesterday, extended friendly hands to each other.

Half a century later, Bill Robertson, speaking on behalf of the veterans of the 273rd Regiment, 69th Division | US Army at a ceremony in Washington, said: "This was the climax after a long wait and excitement. We rejoiced, we celebrated. We were all overwhelmed with a sense of triumph. They proclaimed toasts. They slapped each other on the back. We hugged. Shook each other's hands. We exchanged souvenirs. We understood that our meeting had a significant meaning and meant the end of the Nazi Wehrmacht. We were glad that we had lived to see the Victory, and we felt that it was not long to wait for peace." Of the approximately 150-200 American officers and soldiers who followed Robertson on the eastern bank of the river, at the

'Lulechnik V. Meeting on the Elbe. Year 45. International Russian magazine "Russian Globe". May 2009 No. 5. American version of events.

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The ceremony in Washington DC was attended by 35 veterans.

It seemed to Soviet soldiers and officers in those unforgettable spring days that the long-awaited hour of all past years had come.

The American and Russian armies met 75 miles (50 km) south of Berlin, cutting German territory in two and closing the last gap that existed between them. Eastern and Western fronts. In one of the American newspapers it was written about this event as follows:

ka, which was simultaneously announced by Washington, Moscow and London, took place on April 25 in the afternoon in Torgau on the Elbe River ... Russian soldiers can best be described as follows: exactly the same as the Americans, they are all seized by a feeling of irrepressible fun, a great new world..."

By chance, Lieutenant Robertson found himself that day on the opposite east coast opposite the Russian part. His patrol was searching for wounded American soldiers. Alexander Silvashin, noticing the American flag, mistook it for a deceptive maneuver of the enemy, and the Russian soldiers opened fire. But the alarming situation quickly dissipated. The famous picture of "Ryan and Ivan" appeared in the world press.

American Corporal Joe Polowski bequeathed to bury him in Torgau, which was done in 1983. Before his death, he said that the soldiers of both countries took an oath on the Elbe - not to allow a new war. "At this historic moment," he recalled, "all of us ordinary soldiers, Americans and Russians alike, were national heroes when we met." "We were just happy" - this is how the American veteran Roland Hay remembered these days.

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the meeting on the Elbe in 1995, an exhibition was opened in the Torgau Town Hall building, where the organizers also presented the famous photograph, which we talked about earlier. The ceremony was attended by former Lieutenant Silvashin. He was then 83 years old. He races

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said without embellishment about how the meeting of Russians and Americans took place 50 years ago.

Why not drink for such a joyful event? And they drank with might and main! "On our shore," recalls retired colonel Stepan Stankov, "there were two or three barrels of vodka. They were quickly emptied. The Americans liked our "front line", and the Russians rejected whiskey." Since then, a curious document has been preserved - the order of General Omar Bradley: "Officers who go to meet the Russians and to withstand the onslaught of their friendship must eat 50 grams of butter before breakfast." Did it help?

How did the Soviet press mark the meeting on the Elbe? Here is an excerpt from the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper dated April 28, 1945: "Approaching the Elbe, our soldiers and officers knew that here, in Saxony, the first meeting with the troops of our Western allies would take place. Our radio operators were the first to come into contact with units of the 12th group of the American army. The conversation between our and allied radio operators took place at a moment when the advanced units of the 1st Ukrainian Front were already less than

thirty kilometers from our comrades in arms. "We'll see you soon!" - radioed our signalmen. In the advanced ranks of our allies, among the radio operators were people who knew the Russian language. They kept in touch with our radio operators, conveying greetings to them from their soldiers and officers, informing them that in all their units they were anxiously awaiting a meeting with the Red Army.

Where will the meeting take place? Who will be the first to shake hands with a friend?

The meeting took place under the following circumstances. The battalion of our guardsmen was approaching the river. On its bank stood a medieval castle, surrounded by a high thick wall with towers. Captain Dolgikh's battalion took this German stronghold by storm. At this time, several armored vehicles under a white-blue-red flag drove up to the castle from the west. Soldiers in spotted uniforms and round helmets jumped out of the vehicles. Hearing

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exclamations of "Moscow! Chita (the capital of the Far East)! Victory!" An amazing coincidence seemed happy before a sign to all witnesses. The commander of the allied battalion turned out to be the namesake and even a relative of the Soviet commander. His ancestors, as can be understood from his story, once left Russia in search of happiness to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Each of the unexpectedly meeting relatives knew nothing of the existence of the other, but now the fighting brotherhood against Hitlerism united them even more closely than the ties of blood. They hug tightly, and this moment is forever captured in the photograph.

The meeting took place near the city of Torgau, at two points. From now on, this small Saxon town with an old town hall, remembering Luther and the Seven Years' War, standing on the banks of the Elbe, will go down in history. Soviet and allied officers paid each other visits. The battle colors of the Soviet regiments and units of the Primorsky Corps flutter in the spring wind. Soviet and foreign photojournalists took hundreds of photographs capturing the historic moment. The following shot was especially popular with Western reporters who rushed to the meeting place: the Russians hand out various badges, asterisks, etc. to their allies as a keepsake.

Guards Major-General Petrov arranged a reception for the allied brigadier general and those accompanying him in the area where his division was located. At the reception, both commanders exchanged welcoming speeches. In his speech, the American general stated: "I am experiencing the most joyful days of my life. I am proud and happy that my division was lucky enough to be the first to meet with units of the heroic Red Army in Germany. Two fraternal allied armies met. This meeting will hasten the final defeat of the German military forces.

In the response speech of the Guards, Major General Petrov replied:
"The long-awaited and joyful day has come. On the territory of Germany, two great armies met. The heroic Red Army has traveled a long road of intense struggle and glorious victories. The meeting of the two allied armies

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is a great historical event in the struggle against Nazi Germany. May this meeting serve as a guarantee of the speediest and final defeat of the Hitlerite army and the establishment of a lasting peace.

The meeting on the Elbe will remain in the memory of all those who these days are away from their homeland, on the territory of Germany, fighting for peace and happiness for all mankind.

After the end of World War II, after Potsdam and the occupation of defeated Nazi Germany, the friendly relations of the allies during the war years were overshadowed by the Cold War for a long time.

In 1949, at the very height of the "cold snap", Grigory Alexandrov's film "Meeting on the Elbe" appeared on Soviet screens. He had nothing to do with real events. On the other hand, he was directly related to the Cold War.

We, three former front-line soldiers, me and my friends Isaak Sokolsky and Tolya Konopelkin, went to the Colosseum cinema on Chistye Prudy in Moscow to meet our favorite actors: Lyubov Orlova, Faina Ranevskaya, Alexander Kadochnikov. This "meeting" turned out to be sad! When the lights in the hall came on, they went out into the air and were silent for a long time. Finally, Tolya uttered one word: "Shame

Primitive plot, caricature characters. An American spy, played by Orlova, seduces a Soviet officer, played by Kadochnikov. The Americans are shown in the film as spies, anti-Soviet, speculators, liars... The Soviet press, on the other hand, exalted cheap agitation to the skies. Very soon, the film acquired a cult character ... And in our soldiers' hearts, this film was preserved - "shame!" ...

Finishing the story about the meeting on the Elbe, let's cite a little known fact about another "shame" - about the memo of A.V. Khrulev, Army General, Deputy Supreme Rear Officer. The general wrote it in the name of Beria, Malenkova and Voznesensky. The text below speaks for itself:

"The appearance of our Red Army officer sharply

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differs from the appearance of soldiers and officers of the allied armies, in which cotton uniforms retain their original color for a long time. The unattractive appearance of our faded uniforms is especially striking in the zones of contact between our troops and the allied ones.

Conclusions followed quickly. Technological lines for the production of textile paints began to be urgently exported from Germany to the USSR. But this was not limited to: the communication of Soviet soldiers with the allies was reduced. True, the tunics that had faded during the war were by no means the only reason for this.

Here's another text. As it was then called, "special message".

"Summoned to talk about the final period of the war and about the meeting with the allied forces, the object "Okun" allowed the praise of foreign military equipment, going as far as asserting the superiority of some of its models over the Soviet ones. In particular, he argued that our troops were in great need of special armored vehicles for transporting infantry, which both the Nazi invaders and the allied - the American, British and Far Eastern armies had. In response to my words about THAT "our infantry was the "queen of the fields", the object "Perch" spoke verbatim that, "the queen is a queen, 'only her shoes are too muddy. Up to the neck", which allowed a mockery of the well-known formula of Comrade Stalin himself. He recalled with pleasure the meeting on the Elbe with his relative, an officer of the Belodalnevo sewer army, but claimed that this meeting took place "Purely by chance", without prior agreement, and, as he assures, he did not maintain contacts anymore.

Fisher agent.

The meeting on the Elbe, and not only it alone, gave rise to quite a few unkind and nasty "special messages" ... On the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Victory, film director Marina Droz

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Dova released the documentary "Meeting on the Elbe". The film was shown on Russian television on May 9, 2005 at 23:00.

Many participants of those years, soldiers of the Second World War, did not live to see the 60th anniversary of the Victory. Lieutenant Robert son died in 1999. Lieutenant Silvashin passed away later. But the grateful memory of the first meeting of American and Russian soldiers on the Elbe lives on!

Vigilantly and not without excitement, the Supreme Commander followed the "Meeting on the Elbe" with the allied forces. "How will the officers and soldiers behave in contacts with them? Will there be fraternization or friction? Stalin read daily reports of the political organization and SMERSH about the events taking place on the Elbe. Meetings with American troops are held in a solemn atmosphere. This is what happened during the meeting of the generals: Rusakov, commander of the 58th Rifle Division, and Reinhardt, commander of the 69th American Infantry Division... Toasts, speeches, gifts, cheers. The head of the political department of the 5th Guards Army, Katkov, reports, "... that at this meeting the Americans tried to get stars, epaulettes, buttons as souvenirs as souvenirs ..." The general wrote that "... the Soviet soldiers are surprised that that it is difficult for Americans to distinguish a general from a private. All have the same shape. Whether the case with us: the general is visible from afar ... "

Stalin in his heart agreed with the Soviet soldiers. After all, he himself loved the marshal's uniform and now did not part with it, often lingering for a minute or two at the mirror. "The Americans, with their rotten democracy, do not understand: there must be a hierarchy in society. In uniform, she is immediately visible to everyone ..." "By the way, at the meeting," writes Katkov, "there was the writer Konstantin Simonov. "He writes well about the war," the Supreme Commander remarked in passing to himself. "Now they are fraternizing, and how much effort it took to establish cooperation!"

But not only the attention of the Supreme in those days was occupied by the meeting on the Elbe, the army remained his big issue. According to Stavka, there have already been cases of sad

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th clash of Soviet and American aircraft, there are dead and wounded.

In the last days of April and the beginning of May, Antonov reported daily to Stalin about the meetings of our units with the Allies. For the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, this was the side of the war with which he (and not only him) had long expectations, hopes, disappointments, new hopes and, finally, military cooperation. There is a whole folder of reports on Stalin's desk: the headquarters of the 58th Guards Rifle Division, the headquarters of the 1st Belorussian Front, the commander of the 61st Army, the commander of the 2nd Belorussian Front, the heads of the political departments of the 5th Guards and 13th Armies, the headquarters 3rd Ukrainian Front, political department of the 2nd Belorussian Front, other headquarters and political agencies. Stalin specifically requested these reports. He wanted to feel the immediate mood of the generals, officers, sergeants and rank and file, learn about the behavior of the allies, and adjust his course towards them in the future. After all, the war ended only in the West. Allied leaders, holding out their hands to each other in Tehran, Yalta (and soon in Potsda-

uh), have thus taken several major steps towards securing the long-awaited peace. Then, in the spring of 1945, it seemed that the alliance of former enemies was strong and durable. For all Stalin's orthodoxy, in the name of the anti-fascist coalition, he sacrificed the Comintern, pushed ideological postulates far aside, turned a blind eye to the anti-Sovietism of Churchill and Western democracies in general. At the most critical, turning points, pragmatic considerations always came to the fore with Stalin. Usually the Supreme Commander-in-Chief read only the reports of the General Staff, the reports of the fronts, the reports of the representatives of the Headquarters. And now, in the days of the approaching triumph, he looked through many reports of a different content.

Vasily Askalenov, a Cossack, served in the military army of Budyonny during the Civil War. In 1937 he was arrested for "disrespect for DOSAF" (Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Army and Navy). According to an informant, bro

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forces the DOSAF brand he bought into the trash can. Luckily, they released it a few months later. There were rumors that Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny himself stood up for him.

Left in the army. Patriotic met colonel com. He commanded the 173rd Infantry Guards Division near Stalingrad. Came to Berlin. Was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. He ended the war as a major general. Participated in a meeting on the Elbe with the allies. SMERSH received a denunciation: "the general smiled painfully at the Americans." Reported to Abakumov, and he - to the Supreme. Comrade Stalin said: "You have to feel it."

Vasily Askalenov was arrested. And so they "felt" that they made the Cossack morally and physically half-dead, and then released him. He was brought home on a stretcher, and a couple of weeks later he died ...

On April 23, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command issued Directive No. 11075, which set out instructions for the troops on actions during meetings with fellow countrymen. In accordance with it, Marshal Zhukov prepared and sent to the troops a Directive, in which it was clearly indicated how to behave, what to say, what to be silent about, not to take the "initiative" of organizing meetings, but to report everything immediately to the top, "Don't tell anyone about our plans and combat missions of our troops..."!

What was most important for Stalin in those historical days was to make sure that the allied armies did not cross their zone of "occupation" established at the Crimean Conference - along the Elbe River. The common signal for the Soviet troops was a red rocket, for the Americans a green one. Everything went wrong...

In the book by S.Ya. Lavrenev and N.M. Popov,

It is known that in those April days during the meeting on the Elbe "it was like this and what was not like that ..." - a look from the West and a look from the East.

| Lavrenev S. Ya., Popov M. M. The collapse of the Reich. Military Historical Library. M.: AST, 2000. Chapter 3. "Still allies. Meeting on the Elbe. View from the West. View from the East. pp. 247-274.

'Lavrenev S. Ya., Popov N. M. The collapse of the Reich. M.: AST, 2000. S. 247-274.

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At the present time, how ridiculous and stupid the fears of the Soviet authorities and their assessment of the behavior of the allied troops look, in every question asked by the Americans, Soviet officers and generals then saw an almost insidious plan, attempts to reveal some mythical secrets and secrets of the Soviet Union. Army. All this is described in detail in the cited book.

In one of the examples, confirming or mentioned above, the energetic activities of the journalist of the American newspaper "Post Dishag" from St. Louis Vikenya Urvin seemed very suspicious to the Soviet authorities. She tried to leave the regiment that had received the Americans, but she was "turned" back and then sent to the west coast. An American journalist interviewed senior sergeant Liza Parnikova, nurse of the medical battalion of the 58th Guards Rifle Division. In one of the political reports, she reports in detail: an American journalist, putting a machine gun on her, took a picture of an important nurse, who showed vigilance and, to the question: "in what part did she arrive to meet with the Americans", answered, "that she came from a sanitary institution "... By the way, the American army did not hide the numbers of its military units (armies, divisions, regiments) from the Germans. Considering that it is not necessary to make a secret out of this, the enemy will still know which part is fighting with him. From the Soviet Army, as we know, from the beginning of the war until its end, all this turned out to be a certain combat unit under a single name ... Meanwhile, the Germans knew exactly the numbers of the units that fought with them.

The meeting on the Elbe between the allies continued until May 17, 1945. It is described in detail in many newspapers and magazines, shown in newsreels both in the West and in the East. It ended with a meeting between I.S. Konev, commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front, and Omar Bradley, commander of the 12th group of American troops. In his memoirs, published after the war, Omar Bradley spoke in detail about these meetings, which, unfortunately, I.S. Konev did not do in his memoirs.

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Very soon, on the banks of the Elbe, where only recently American and Russian soldiers met, more meetings took place, about which the Soviet press wrote nothing, and for many years after them no one even guessed that such a thing could happen here.

It turns out that there was a rather large prison in Torgau, where criminals were kept during the Nazi regime. Having examined it, the Smershevites who arrived on the Elba recognized it as quite suitable for receiving "returnees".

Almost daily they met barges arriving from the American zone. They brought the so-called displaced persons from Tartemünde. Greeting the Americans cordially, the Smershevites immediately changed their behavior as soon as the barges left the shore and went in the opposite direction. A senior officer would appear and shout in a menacing voice: "Hey, you traitors, collect your things and form a column!" Soldiers appeared with vicious dogs, ready in an instant to rush at people and tear them to pieces.

Men and women, dumbfounded and agitated by such an unexpected reception by the first Soviet people they saw, went limp and meekly began to line up in a column ... They were surrounded by machine gunners and without further ado were taken to Torgau.

In one wing of the prison, Vlasovites sentenced to execution were kept. There are stories that from there, through the windows, the prisoners shouted: "We died for the Motherland, and not for Stalin!" The colonel, who ended up in the hospital, having found out that the female doctor was from the "political", told her:

— Obviously, I will soon be shot, but our hatred for the Bolsheviks has no end.

"There is nothing more terrible in life than the absolute impossibility of changing what you have already done."

Galsworthy

Chapter Ten

POLITICAL AND MILITARY PASSIONS
AROUND THE CAPTURE OF
BERLIN. IS VALENTIN FALIN RIGHT?

"Without the storming of Berlin, a third world war would have awaited Russia," says Valentin Falin, an ardent anti-Westernist and former party leader, categorically.

functionary, diplomat, doctor of historical sciences. He presented his views in an article of the same name.

At first, Falin tries to answer the question: were the sacrifices justified (almost 120,000)? for the sake of taking Berlin under Soviet control and hoisting the Banner of Victory on the Reichstag? True, there was a version, rather invented by a Russian historian, that the Germans offered the allies to surrender Berlin without a fight. The behavior of the Wehrmacht on the Western Front until the last days of the war does not testify in its favor.

Answering the question posed, Falin believes that the capture of Berlin by the Red Army, despite high losses, was not a gamble, as some Western historians interpret, but a deeply thought-out political military and psychological step, calculated on pre-

: Falin V. Without the storming of Berlin, Russia would have been waiting for the third world war. "New story". RIA News. March 23, 2005. In [r://apn-ogapee.sot.ma/agie/nuz{ogu/66/7709](http://apn-ogapee.sot.ma/agie/nuz{ogu/66/7709).

? Approximate numbers of taking. Berlin cost much more losses. (Author's note)

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prevention of a new war, now with the allies. The main meaning of such a step, according to Falin, was to demonstrate the enormous power of the Red Army, capable of crushing any force at that moment. Is not it? A few preliminary words before our answer.

Should we take the German capital? With this question, Winston Churchill turned not to US President Roosevelt, but to Eisenhower as the commander-in-chief of the allied forces. "The war is coming to an end," said the British prime minister, "and now political problems are coming to the fore. Therefore, first of all, we need to take control of Berlin before the Russians. Your troops will reach the Elbe before the Soviet divisions and can quickly overcome the distance from the river to Berlin.

Eisenhower told Churchill that the Allied forces were not going to take Berlin because it was of no military value. In addition, there is already a demarcation line agreed with the Russians, which will run 150 kilometers west of Berlin, regardless of where the Allied forces stop after the victory. In addition, Eisenhower replied, we calculated the probable losses in moving towards Berlin and capturing it. They will amount to at least 100 thousand people in the name of a political gain that is not entirely clear. With this, the conversation ended.

As for Stalin's position - "to take Berlin any

price," she is well known.

When the military reported to the Supreme Commander their conclusions and calculations about the high losses associated with the capture of Berlin, turned by the German command into a fortress city, Stalin, without hesitation, answered them: "We don't need a cheap victory!" And that's all, boys in pants with stripes, go ahead!

The Red Army laid down for the implementation of the Stalinist decision not 120 thousand people, as Falin writes, but 300 thousand, if not more. Who counted? Zhukov, Konev - hardly.

I carefully read the memoirs several times

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Marshal I.S. Konev, commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front, about the Berlin operation. About the human losses of his armies, not a word, not a word! True, the marshal reports the loss of 800 tanks and the wounding of one of his military commanders. S.Ya.Lavrenov and I.M.Popov tell in detail about the losses on the 1st Belorussian Front. In this book, the number of those killed on the 1st Belorussian Front is 140 thousand, as well as the loss of over 2500 tanks and self-propelled guns.

Did the Allies have the opportunity to take Berlin before the Soviet troops? The leaders of the Western countries and the Eisenhower, as well as Montgomery, believed that there was! In that case, why did they give the capital of Germany to the Red Army? In particular, Roosevelt believed that "... we must get Berlin, and let the Soviets take the territory to the East? ". Prime Minister Churchill and Field Marshal Montgomery made Berlin their main target.

Very soon after the Yalta Conference, Churchill expressed his attitude about the possibilities of further cooperation with the Soviet Union, which had become a mortal threat to the free world.

Let us now turn to the specific facts presented by Falin:

First assertion. Allegedly in March 1945, the Western Front no longer existed. Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower thinks otherwise. He detailed his views on the events taking place then on the Western Front in his memoirs?.

"In March 1945, the allied army crossed the Rhine, there was a bloody battle for the Ruhr basin ... By [April 1, the allied forces completely surrounded the Ruhr ... "Already on the territory of Germany proper," writes Eisenhower, "powerful groups of allied forces were advancing. The Germans almost completely lost the Ruhr, Saar, Sile-

| LavrenovS. Ya., Popov I. M. The collapse of the Reich. M.: AST, 2000. S. 84-326. P.159-189.

2 BBC. "Allies. A failed triumph." 8.21.09.

55 3 Eisenhower dd. Crusade to Europe. Smolensk: Rusich, 0.

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ziyu. The remnants of industry, dispersed throughout the central part of Germany, could no longer provide for the army, but it continued to fight on the fronts. The communication system was so destroyed that not a single Nazi leader could be sure that his orders would reach the troops (communication was destroyed by American strategic aviation).

The crossing of the Rhine and the capture of the 325,000-strong Ruhr group of Germans at the end of March 1945 actually put an end to the organized resistance of the Wehrmacht in the West.

On March 31, Eisenhower addressed an appeal to the German troops and population, outlining the hopelessness of their situation - "to stop resistance." "However," the general writes further, "Hitler and his accomplices still held the people in a stranglehold. The Gestapo and the SS acted so effectively that the country continued to fight "(S. P. 584).

The German troops on the Western Front were taught the idea that they constituted the rear of the troops in the East. Their collapse will lead to the collapse of the Eastern Front. In order to keep the armies from retreating in battles with the allies, Hitler organized the so-called "flying tribunal" headed by the Nazi fanatic General Hütier, this general received the right to shoot officers and soldiers: for cowardice, for not following the orders of the Fuhrer ... So many died officers and soldiers.

On April 25, a meeting of the Allied forces and the Red Army took place on the banks of the Elbe, as a result of which the territory of Germany was cut into two parts.

The second statement. Falin reproaches the allies for accepting the surrender of the Germans at Reims as a separate decision. Representatives of the German command, who arrived at the headquarters of the Allies, tried to drag out the negotiations, trying to convince their command to agree to surrender only on the Western Front. But such proposals were categorically rejected. The act of unconditional surrender on all fronts was signed

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May 7 at 2:40 p.m. According to him, hostilities were to be stopped at midnight on May 8, 1945. The act was also signed by Russian and French representatives

waiters.

The history of the signing of the Act of Surrender in Reims deserves special attention, especially the participation in this procedure of the Soviet representative, General Susloprov.

Falin gives the Act of signing the surrender of the Germans literally a detective character. Here is what he writes: "... It became a huge effort for us to force Truman to confirm the surrender in Berlin... On May 9, with the participation of the USSR and the allies, to agree on a single Victory Day... By the way, another forgery took place in Reims. The text of the agreement on the unconditional surrender of Germany to the Allies was approved by the Yalta Conference. It was signed by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin. But the Americans pretended to forget about the existence of the document, which, by the way, was in the safe of Chief of Staff Eisenhower Smith. Eisenhower's entourage, under the leadership of Smith, drew up a new document, "cleared" of the Yalta provisions that were undesirable for the Allies. At the same time, the document was signed by General Smith on behalf of the Allies, and the Soviet Union was not even mentioned, as if it did not participate in the war. Here is the spectacle played out in Reims. The document of surrender in Reims was handed over to the Germans before it was received in Mo

skwe."

The history of the signing of the document in Reims and all the insinuations of Comrade Falin deserve more detailed comments.

The document on the military surrender of Germany was signed by the High Command of the German Wehrmacht in Reims and in Karlshorst, where the headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces (General Eisenhower) and the Red Army (Marshal Zhukov) were located. However, neither in Reims nor in Karlshorst did the German representatives

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presented developed by ECC! document on the "unconditional surrender of Germany", since at this point the question of whether the Germans should sign the original version accepted by all four powers represented in London, or the text of the document revised by the three great powers at Yalta, was not yet finally resolved. Therefore, Eisenhower had to draw up a completely new surrender document on the basis of directives on local partial surrenders and propose it for signing by representatives of the Wehrmacht High Command.

The unconditional state-political surrender of Germany came into force on June 5, 1945. Since at that time the government of the German Reich and the High Command of the Wehrmacht were already in military captivity with the Allies, the unconditional military and complete state-political surrender of Germany was announced by the four victorious powers in the form of a declaration of the European Control Commission: "Declaration of the defeat of Germany and the assumption of sovereignty over Germany by the governments of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Provisional Government of the French Republic, together with statements about occupation zones and a control mechanism in Germany. Comparison of the document of the ECC with the declaration of the ECC shows that without exception all the articles of the text of the document were transferred to the declaration without significant changes.

Speaking about the forgery, Valentin Falin showed his complete ignorance of the question he was considering about the document on unconditional surrender.

G.K. Zhukov recalls that Stalin told him:

- ... We agreed with the allies to consider the signing of the act in Reims as a preliminary protocol of capitulation -

' European Control Commission, held in London since 1944. (Author's note)

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tions. Tomorrow representatives of the German High Command and representatives of the High Command of the Allied Forces will arrive in Berlin. You are appointed as the representative of the Supreme High Command of the Soviet troops.

In the West, the war was considered already over. On this basis, the United States and Britain proposed that on May 8 the heads of government of the three powers should officially announce victory over Germany. The Soviet government could not agree to this for the reason that the fighting on the Soviet-German front was still going on. Let us now turn to German, Soviet, English and American documents.

Stalin tried to convince Harry Truman and Winston Churchill to consider May 9, not May 8, as Victory Day, but nothing came of this idea. Here is Stalin's message on this matter and the answers to him by the American President and the British Prime Minister:

"I received your messages of May 7 regarding the announcement of the surrender of Germany.

The High Command of the Red Army has no confidence that the order of the German High Command for unconditional surrender will be carried out by the German troops on the Eastern Front. Therefore, we fear that if the government of the USSR announces today the surrender of Germany, we will find ourselves in an awkward position and mislead the public opinion of the Soviet Union. It must be borne in mind that the resistance of the German troops on the Eastern Front is not weakening, and, judging by the radio intercepts, a significant group of German troops directly declares their intention to continue resistance and not obey Doenitz's order to surrender.

Therefore, the command of the Soviet troops would like to wait until the moment when the surrender of the German troops comes into force, and thus postpone the announcement of the Governments of the surrender of the Germans to May 9, at 7 o'clock Moscow time.

kovsky time. May 7, 1945.

Personal and strictly secret message from Mr. Churchill to Marshal Stalin:

"I have just received your message and have also read a letter from General Antonov to General Eisenhower proposing that the announcement of Germany's surrender be delayed until May 9, 1945. It will be impossible for me to delay my application for 24 hours as you suggest. Moreover, the parliament will demand information about yesterday's signing in Reims and about the official ratification scheduled for today in Berlin ... "

\$ May 1945.

On May 8, President G. Truman sent a letter to the USSR Ambassador to the USA A. Gromyko with the following content: "I ask you to inform Marshal Stalin that his message addressed to me was received at the White House today at one in the morning. However, when the message reached me, preparations had advanced so far that it was impossible to consider postponing my announcement of Germany's surrender.

Finally, the story of the signing of the Instrument of Surrender of Germany by General Susloparov, head of the Soviet mission to the Supreme Command of the Allied Forces, should be briefly recounted. She is uninteresting.

On the evening of May 6, D. Eisenhower's adjutant flew to the head of the Soviet military mission in Paris, General Susloparov. He conveyed the invitation of the Commander-in-Chief

urgently arrive at his headquarters. D. Eisenhower received I. A. Sus Loparov. Smiling, he said that Hitler's General Jodl had arrived with a proposal to capitulate to the Anglo-American troops and continue to fight against the USSR ... "

A little later, Susloparov was again invited to Eisenhower, who informed the representative of the USSR that after the demand of the allies for complete surrender, the Germans agreed to sign the corresponding act. Eisenhower

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asked Susloparov to inform Moscow of the text of the capitulation, obtain approval there and sign it on behalf of the Soviet Union. The signing, according to him, was scheduled for 2 hours 4 minutes on May 7, 1945 in the premises of the operational department at the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief.

The draft document received by Susloparov spoke of the unconditional surrender of all land, sea and air forces currently under German control. The German command was obliged to give an order to cease hostilities at 00:01 (Moscow time) on May 9. All German troops were to remain in their positions. It was forbidden to disable weapons and other means of armed struggle. The execution of all orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Forces and the Soviet Supreme High Command was guaranteed.

By the time Susloparov's telegram was reported to its destination, several hours had passed. It was past midnight in Reims, and it was time to sign the surrender. Instructions from Moscow did not come. A situation arose when the German Surrender Act could only be signed between Germany, England and the USA, which would give the Germans the opportunity to continue fighting on the Eastern Front.

The position of the head of the Soviet military mission turned out to be very difficult. Everything now depended on him. Put your signature on behalf of the USSR or refuse?

Ivan Susloparov was well aware that the maneuver of the Germans by capitulation only to the Allies could turn into the greatest misfortune in the event of any oversight on his part. He read and re-read the text of the surrender and did not find any hidden malice in it. At the same time, pictures of the war arose before the eyes of the general, where every minute claimed many human lives. The head of the Soviet military mission made a courageous decision to sign the document.

At 2:41 a.m., the surrender protocol was signed.

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dignity. However, Susloparov insisted on including a special note in the document, according to which the ceremony of signing the Act of Surrender should be repeated once more if one of the Allied states so requests. Dwight Eisenhower and representatives of other powers at his headquarters agreed with Susloparov's remarks. At 2:41 am on May 7, in the hall where the cameramen of the Commander-in-Chief of the Anglo-American Forces were working with might and main, a protocol was signed on the unconditional surrender of Germany on all fronts ...

Susloparov immediately sent his report on the historical event to Moscow, and from there a counter dispatch was already flying in: "Do not sign any documents!" On the announcement of the surrender on May 7, a ban was imposed. The general's surname disappeared from the military-historical literature for a long time. Ivan Alekseevich was recalled to the USSR. He worked at the Military Diplomatic Academy, was the head of the course. He died on December 16, 1974 in Moscow and was buried at the Vvedensky cemetery. I will add: General Susloparov accomplished a feat in Reims without thinking about his future fate.

There is another version, let me give it.

As already noted, the Reims protocol from the USSR was signed by the head of the Russian military mission at the Allied headquarters, Major General I. A. Susloparov. He allegedly failed to get in touch with the Soviet High Command. I personally doubt it. Major-General would never have signed a document of such significance without Moscow's sanction. In addition, Eisenhower reported this event to Moscow, who mentioned Susloparov in his letter. Probably, Stalin, for the sake of appearances, indicated his dissatisfaction with Susloparov, and then telephoned Vyshinsky in Berlin and informed him that he had no complaints against this general. In September 1945, Susloparov was recalled to Moscow and appointed to a rather high

! Erofeev Yu.N. The general who went down in history. Independent military review, 11.24.2000

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position, with promotion: head of the Higher Intelligence Courses of the Red Army. In 1950, another promotion. He is appointed head of intelligence courses at the Military Diplomatic Academy. Consequently, among other things, he was a very high-ranking intelligence officer at Eisenhower's Headquarters. It should be noted that many military figures after the war were either dismissed from service or were appointed with significant

a significant decrease. So Susloparov was by no means punished for signing the Act of Surrender in Reims, but, as they say, "quite the opposite." Stalin needed an excuse not to recognize the Act, signed at Eisenhower's headquarters, as final. He passionately wished that this event would take place in defeated Berlin and that the Soviet marshal G.K. Zhukov put the main signature under the document of surrender.

The leader of the USSR proposed to postpone the announcement of the surrender of Nazi Germany to 19:00 Moscow time on May 9, 1945. On the evening of May 7, when crowds of people in the Western capitals were already celebrating the as yet unofficially announced victory, a festive concert was held in Moscow. It was expected that it was there that the official announcement of the Victory would follow. The American and British ambassadors J. Kennan and F. Roberts were invited to the event. But it turned out that the concert was dedicated not to the Victory, but to the 40th anniversary of the invention of radio by the Popovs. About these events, half a century later, F. Roberts wrote: "In the middle of the evening, J. Kennan and I approached Vyshinsky and told him: "We have nothing against your Mr. Marconi, but you have a more serious reason to celebrate". With that, we left the hall "

The Western allies were more accommodating than Stalin. Therefore, without much persuasion, they went to meet the request of the Soviet side.

Third assertion. Falin accuses the Allies of not participating in the Parade on the occasion of the Victory over Nazi Germany, seeing in this fact the first signs of a split. Here is how Eisenhower explains his behavior: "... On the ground

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Allies were invited to the signing ceremony, but I personally considered it unsuitable for me to go there. The Germans have already visited the headquarters of the Western Allies to sign the act of unconditional surrender. And I thought that the ratification in Berlin should be the business of the Soviets. So I appointed my second in command, Air Chief Marshal Tedlor, to represent me at the ceremony." (By the way, Stalin gave General Eisenhower a newsreel about the ceremony of signing the Act of Unconditional Surrender by the Germans on May 9 in Berlin and about the Victory Parade.)

Fourth statement. Falin argues that the allies did not take Berlin, allegedly because they did not have enough troops. "On the day of surrender, that is, May 7, 1945, General Eisenhower declared: "Under my command were 3 million army men, 61 American divisions." This was enough to capture Berlin. All the more so since the Allied troops were not so far from Berlin back in March. We did not name the enormous strength of the strategic aviation of the allies, capable at that time of

how many hours to deliver thousands of soldiers and officers to any part of German territory.

Fifth assertion. Falin claims that the allies in Europe, even before the end of the war, began to prepare for an attack on the USSR. This statement can be refuted by only two examples. In his book, General Eisenhower tells that a month before the signing of the Act of Unconditional Surrender by the Germans in Reims, the High Command of the Allied Forces began preparations for the transfer of its troops to the Pacific theater of military operations, for the dismissal and sending of part of the troops to America. On July 18, 1945, Dwight Eisenhower resigned as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces, and remained only Commander of American Forces in Europe.

Sixth statement. Falin accuses the Allies of deliberately bombing Dresden and the Czech Skoda factories, knowing that the territory where they are located will pass to the Red Army. The bombing of Dresden was

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agreed with the command of the Red Army. True, some historians write that it was carried out by the Allies to demonstrate their power. As for the Skoda factories, they were bombed, as were other enterprises in Germany and in the countries occupied by it, which continued to supply the German army with weapons. Falin's examples are far-fetched: just to blame the allies for something.

Seventh statement. About the political "games" around the capture of Berlin. "The only goal," writes Eisenhower, "beyond the Ruhr was Berlin. Its capture, according to Churchill, was important psychologically and ideologically, but, in my opinion, it was neither the usual nor the most desirable target for the troops of the Western Allies. Further, the general explains: "When we stood on the Rhine in the last week of March, 300 miles remained to Berlin. On the way to it, two hundred miles from our front, lay the Elbe River, which served as a significant natural obstacle.

Russian troops firmly entrenched themselves on the Oder, seizing a bridgehead on the western bank of this river, only thirty miles from Berlin. But if we thought of throwing in a sufficient grouping to cross the Elbe with the sole purpose of taking Berlin, then the following complications would arise: first, in all likelihood, the Russians would have surrounded Berlin long before we got there. Secondly, the supply of a large grouping at such a distance without the main bases located west of the Rhine would lead to a practical disconnection from hostilities in all other sectors of the front ... It was advisable to quickly move forward through all of Germany to connect with the Soviet troops, which would dismember the territory of Germany, which means exclusion

to consider the possibility for the Wehrmacht to act as a single entity.

Irving D. The destruction of Dresden, the largest bombing of World War II. 1944-1945. Moscow: Tsentrpolig raf, 2005, pp. 110-111, 114-115, 120-121, 130-131, 167, 186.

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Eighth statement. As for Falin's discussion of archival materials declassified in England about Operation Unthinkable, about preparing for war with the USSR, none of this has anything to do with the heat of passion around the capture of Berlin. And, of course, it requires a special discussion. However, the very name of the operation "Unthinkable" is also a complete violation by Stalin of the Yalta agreements, which he assumed obligations. Establishment of a totalitarian regime in six countries of Eastern Europe and in the Baltic states. The "Unthinkable" is the greatest Allied deception about free elections, the "Unthinkable" is the enslavement of Poland for which Great Britain and France went to war with Hitler.

The "unthinkable" is the development of a scenario or plan in case of aggression by Stalin, that is, the enemy of the Red Army beyond the ridge of Eastern Europe up to the shores of the Atlantic.

There is no doubt that Stalin considered the capture of Berlin, purely emotionally, as a "Gift to himself", as the crown of his military glory, as the fulfillment of the fact before his people: "Kill the beast in its lair and hoist the banner over the Reichstag." How the Supreme Commander could miss the historical chance given to him, and what this operation would cost, this question, as always, does not concern him TIL.

However, let us turn to the famous British historian Mark Chasings. After the war, he was in the newspaper "Gwe RaPu Ma!" published a series of articles from Winston Churchill. Here is what he writes in his Memoirs:

"Churchill wanted to drive the Russians out of Eastern Europe by mobilizing the defeated Nazis," historian Max Hastings writes in Te Oatsu Mai, continuing his series of articles on the British premier.

"In the spring of 1945, having learned that the Americans were going

Materials of the controversy around the article by Valentin Falin in the published article "For our and your Victory. Controversy about the Second World War. ir: //m\m.tapa.gi/ \$upez/05/01/19/3588/245786 Vet

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stop the attack on Berlin from the west and leave the German capital at the mercy of the Red Army, Churchill was indignant," the author narrates. He recommended that the Allies continue moving east until the Russians showed a desire to comply with the earlier agreement regarding the future political structure of Europe.

Stalin, for his part, looked at Churchill with great suspicion: he feared that the West would conclude a separate peace with Hitler and perhaps even turn their weapons against the USSR. However, the Americans did not want to enter into a confrontation with Moscow and held back Churchill, the author notes. In 1941, Churchill assumed that with the end of the war, the US and the British Empire would form the most powerful bloc in history, but by 1945 the USSR was far stronger and Britain weaker than he had expected. Churchill was also burdened by the fate of Poland, which was under the rule of the USSR. |

"A few days after the surrender of Germany, Churchill astounded his General Staff with the question of whether the Anglo-American troops were capable of launching an offensive to push back the Soviet troops," the author writes, explaining that Churchill wanted to achieve a fair solution to the situation for Poland. He informed the military that they would have German manpower and the remnants of Germany's industrial potential at their disposal. "In other words, the defeated Germans had to be mobilized and brought to the side of the West," the author explains. A date was even set for the offensive under the code name "Operation Unimaginable" - | July 1945.

The Foreign Office and the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, Sir Alan Brooke, were intimidated by Churchill's belligerence. Nevertheless, the headquarters considered scenarios of military operations against the Russians in strict secrecy, and Stalin, as one might expect, soon learned about what was happening in the camp of the British. For the general public, Churchill's idea remained a state secret for more than half a century, until in 1998 the National

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ny archive has not declassified the documents that confirm it.

The British strategists, in their report to Churchill, emphasized that the Russians could resort to a tactic that brought them great success against the Germans - to retreat across the vast territory of the USSR. The generals calculated that 47 divisions, including 14 armored divisions, would be needed for the offensive, and another 40 divisions should be kept in reserve for defense or occupation needs. The Russians can field twice as many soldiers and tanks. Headquarters concluded that

the war with the USSR would be protracted and costly. The Bree dances also doubted that the German soldiers who had fought on the Eastern Front would want to return there. In his diary, Brooke called Churchill's idea fantastic and the chances of success incredibly slim. "Undoubtedly, from now on, Russia in Europe has no equal in power," he concluded. The headquarters report also stated that Great Britain would not be able to fight the USSR without access to American resources.

In response, Churchill asked to study options for the defense of Great Britain from the onslaught of Soviet forces from the sea. The headquarters suggested that Moscow would subject Britain to an intense rocket attack, which would require 230 fighter squadrons and another 300 bombers to defend against.

"A few more days later, the file on Operation Unimaginable was closed: President Truman sent a telegram clearly explaining that the Americans would not under any circumstances try to drive the Russians out of Poland by force and would not even threaten Moscow with such actions," writes author.

Churchill never doubted for a moment the evil intentions of the USSR regarding Eastern Europe and the whole world, the author notes, explaining that in this sense the British Prime Minister was ahead of his time. In August 1946, the US Army General Staff, fearing a conflict with the USSR, began to draw up a scenario of their actions in this case, and in London the dust was blown off the Unimaginable dossier.

"An attempt to liberate Eastern Europe by force of arms

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was never regarded as politically acceptable or militarily feasible, but the preparation of the military for conflict with the USSR became one of the main features of the Cold War," the author concludes.

Churchill supported Montgomery, who trivially called for the capture of Berlin, but the British could not do anything against the will of the American President and Eisenhower. On March 28, on his own initiative, and without even informing his British colleagues, Eisenhower notified Stalin in a dispatch that he did not intend to take Berlin. This caused outrage in London and relief in Moscow. In response, Stalin wrote that he fully shared the opinion of the American commander that Berlin had already lost its military-strategic importance and that with its capture

will not rush.

Stalin was in a hurry. On April 16, Marshal Zhukov, on the orders of Stalin, began the assault on Berlin, although, to be honest, he was not prepared for it.

Now in more detail how and what happened in the camp of the allies. General Eisenhower sent his messages to Stalin, acting within the framework of the powers granted to him. However, it soon became clear that Churchill was dissatisfied with the actions of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces and sharply opposed such actions. "He did not agree with my plan," writes Eisenhower, "and considered that, as the campaign was now drawing to a close, the actions of all troops had assumed political significance ... He was greatly distressed and worried that the plan did not provide for in first of all, to throw forward Montgomery with all the forces that I could give him from the American troops and in a determined attempt to capture Berlin ahead of the Russians. And he sent a telegram to Washington outlining his point of view.

Almost eight pages of General Eisenhower's memoirs are occupied by the author's reminiscences of Churchill's complaint to Washington (pp. 448-457). Ultimately, the American Chief of Staff, General Marshall, supported the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

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How did Stalin react to the "Eisenhower plan" he received?

In a personal and top secret telegram, Stalin informed Eisenhower that his proposed "plan to split the German forces by joining Soviet troops with your troops is in complete agreement with the plan of the Soviet High Command." Stalin also agreed with the general that the Erfurt-Leipzig-Dresden region should be the junction of the Allied and Soviet troops, and believed that the main blow of the Soviet troops should be delivered in this direction. "Berlin has lost its former strategic importance," Stalin wrote, "that is why the Soviet High Command is thinking of allocating secondary forces in the direction of Berlin." Having approved the American plan for the formation of a second additional ring by joining Soviet and allied troops in the Vienna-Linz-Regensburg region, the head of the Soviet government determined the direction of the main attack of the Soviet troops approximately in the second half of May.

How did real events develop around the capture of Berlin? In an effort to get ahead of the Allies in capturing Berlin, Stalin decided to mislead them about the true intentions of the Red Army and sent them, as can be seen from the above telegram, false information about the directions of the main attack of the 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts and the time of the offensive. Soviet troops. On the night of April 2, 1945, Stalin and Antonov signed a directive on the preparation of the Berlin operation, although the 2nd Belorussian Front did not have time to prepare for the start of the offensive scheduled for April 16.